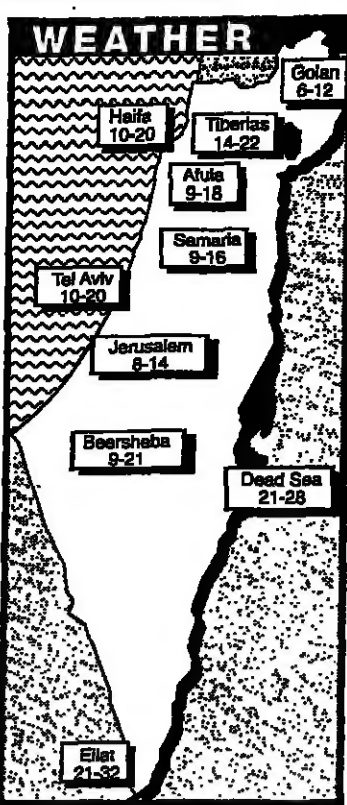


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AROUND THE WORLD

Location	Low	High	Weather
Amsterdam	01	34	partly
Berlin	01	34	partly
Buenos Aires	15	38	clear
Caracas	25	38	clear
Chicago	03	37	partly
Frankfurt	03	37	partly
Geneva	03	37	partly
Hong Kong	18	25	partly
London	03	37	partly
Los Angeles	11	37	partly
Moscow	03	37	partly
Madrid	03	37	partly
Manila	25	38	clear
Mexico City	18	25	partly
New York	03	37	partly
Paris	03	37	partly
Rome	03	37	partly
Tokyo	18	25	partly
Washington	03	37	partly

Winning cards & numbers

In last night's Payis Hazak drawing, the holder of ticket number 199809 won NIS 1,000,000.

The holder of ticket number 819509 won a car.

Tickets numbered 532433, 060652, 235228, 421654, 420033, 700869, 147830 and 214568 won NIS 5,000. Those tickets ending in 47574, 35370, 68487, 01408, 53909, 48918, 74258, 31852, 14884, 63919, 29431, 62059, 85741, 70088, 83183 01821, 58738, 51586 and 26690 won NIS 1,000. Tickets ending in 076, 153, 487, 832, and 989 won NIS 100. Tickets ending in 50, 21, 25, 30 and 39 won NIS 24. Tickets ending in 6 and 1 won NIS 8.

In yesterday's Mifal Hapayis daily Chance card draw, the lucky cards were the queen of spades, 8 of hearts, ace of diamonds, and 7 of clubs.

Palestinian council to have legislative power

THE Palestinian self-rule council will have legislative powers and its members will be chosen in regional elections likely to be held by September, Palestinian and Israeli negotiators said yesterday.

These agreements emerged from recent negotiations on arrangements for Palestinian general elections, a cornerstone of the autonomy accord. Israel in the past rejected law-making powers for the Palestinian council, arguing that having a legislature is an attribute of statehood,

not of an autonomy government.

Chief Palestinian negotiator Saeb Erekat said yesterday that the Israelis initially proposed the council should serve only as an executive.

"We said the council must have both legislative and executive authorities," Erekat told the PLO's Voice of Palestine radio station. "They now agree that the council will have legislative powers."

No agreement has been reached yet on the number of council members. The Palestinians sought 100,

and the Israelis initially countered with 24.

Chief negotiator Yoel Singer said yesterday that the elections will be regional and proportional.

Judea, Samaria, and Gaza will be divided into districts, and each district will be allotted a number of seats on the council according to the number of residents in the district, Singer told Army Radio.

Candidates will run as individ-

News agencies

uals, not as representatives of parties or factions, Singer said.

In Tunis, PLO leaders meeting to assess the peace deal said there will be no progress without IDF redeployment in the West Bank prior to elections.

"We consider that without Israeli redeployment, it is meaningless to talk about progress in negotiations on elections," Zakaria Lagha told Reuters before entering a second

meeting of Fatah's central council.

The meeting is to be followed by a two-day meeting of the PLO executive.

It is the first time that exiled Palestinian leaders still based in Tunis have taken part in meetings of Fatah since Yasser Arafat and other PLO leaders moved to the Gaza last year.

But so far, only 11 of the 18-member executive committee have arrived, and Palestinian sources said that the other seven, who either oppose the autonomy deal or have res-

ervations about it, would boycott the meeting.

Meanwhile, US Vice President Al Gore has been invited to meet with Arafat in Jericho next week, PLO officials said.

Arrangements for a Gore-Arafat meeting are being discussed with US envoys, said a senior Palestinian Authority official.

Gore will tour several Middle Eastern nations next week, including Israel, Egypt, and Jordan.

Christopher to Arafat: Change PLO covenant

HILLEL KUTTLER

WASHINGTON

US Secretary of State Warren Christopher told Palestinian Authority chairman Yasser Arafat last week that repealing anti-Israel parts of the PLO covenant would assist administration efforts to secure congressional authorization for dealing with the PA, according to an Israeli official here.

Foreign Minister Shimon Peres had earlier secured Arafat's agreement at their recent Erez meeting that the covenant's repeal is an "integral part" of an eventual Israeli-PA agreement on elections for the Palestinian council, the official added.

Under the Peres-Arafat agreement, the council's first official act

would be to take steps against the covenant, the official said.

Such an arrangement ties into the US because of the congressional requirement that the administration issue a report every six months about PA compliance with the Oslo Accords. The next reporting date is June 1.

The US report must certify the PA's compliance in order for Congress to extend its waiver of laws prohibiting contacts with the PLO.

Because Israel and the PA are not due to wrap up talks on elections until July 1, the US will have to tell Congress the PA will take steps to change the charter in order to obtain a favorable compliance report.

2 soldiers hit by car in Gaza, circumstances unclear

ALON PINKAS

were deliberately run down.

The driver, Hisham Hamdan, 30, a suspected Hamas activist, is being interrogated.

The two soldiers were walking along the edge of the road toward an observation post near Kfar Darom.

when a car with Palestinian license plates hit them. The car then crashed into a concrete wall. The driver tried to escape, but was apprehended by the lightly injured soldier.

Miropolsky, who was uncon-

scious, was evacuated by helicopter to Soroka Hospital in Beersheba.

Hamdan claimed he lost control of the car. The lightly injured soldier said the car had been steered to the road's edge after the driver spotted the two soldiers walking, but he could not say it was done deliberately.

Quiet Land Day planned with rallies but no strike

DAVID RUDGE

ISRAELI Arab leaders yesterday decided to mark Land Day at the end of this month with rallies and memorial services - but no general strike.

"For the first time nobody even raised the idea of staging a general strike," said Hussein Suleiman, spokesman for the Israeli Arab leadership committee.

The committee, composed of local authority heads, Arab MKs from all parties and leading public figures, met in Shfaram in the Galilee yesterday to decide the format for Land Day on March 30.

The day commemorates the anniversary of the first Land Day demonstrations by Israeli Arabs in 1976 to protest against state expropriation of Arab-owned land.

The demonstrations 19 years ago erupted into violent clashes between protesters and riot police. Several demonstrators, from Kfar Kana, near Nazareth and the Saknin area, in the Beit Netofa Valley region of the Galilee, were killed and dozens of people were injured.

In the past, the leadership has called a general strike of the Arab sector to mark Land Day, although in recent years the event has taken on a more festive air.

"We decided that in view of the peace accords with the Palestinians and Jordan and the resumption of the talks between Israel and Syria, and the fact that we wholeheartedly support the peace process, it would be inappropriate to even consider a general strike," Suleiman said after yesterday's meeting.

Schools will be open as normal on the day, although the committee has asked teachers to devote an hour of lessons to teaching youngsters about Land Day. Memorial services are to be held in Saknin and Kfar Kana for those who died in the 1976 riots.

"Rallies will also be held in main centers throughout the country, with the emphasis on pressing the government to speed up the process of granting official status to unrecognized villages and allowing residents of Ikrut and Biram to return to their villages," said Suleiman.

Fear in Lebanon of resumed naval blockade

DAVID RUDGE

CONCERN was expressed in Lebanon yesterday that Israel might intend to resume the naval blockade of ports and fishing grounds, after gunboats fired warning shots at fishing boats off the coast from Tyre.

News agencies and some Lebanese radio stations said the incident

early yesterday had sparked fears that the month-long maritime siege would be reinstated. The blockade was lifted during the recent visit to the region by US Secretary of State Warren Christopher.

(Continued on page 19)

Three die in road crashes

DAVID RUDGE and Itim

THREE people were killed and five injured in four accidents, which occurred within an hour of each other, in Samaria early yesterday morning.

Two soldiers, Lt.-Col. Pinhas Abbo, 32, of Holon, and Sgt.-Maj. Salam Elhavi, 33, of Nazareth, were killed and two others injured, when a minibus skidded on a slippery road and crashed into their jeep, which was parked on the side of the road near Qana. The bus driver suffered light injuries.

Near Kfar Samur, an Arab resi-

dent veered into oncoming traffic and hit a truck head-on. He died instantly.

An Egged bus overturned on the Trans-Samaria Highway, and the driver suffered moderate injuries. On the same road, a truck overturned and its driver was moderately hurt.

Police said it appeared that a number of the accidents were the result of drivers not taking the slippery road conditions into account.

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Drop in Abu Kabir prisoners

RAINE MARCUS

THE number of remand prisoners in the Abu Kabir lockup dropped by 800 in January and February compared with the same period last year, Tel Aviv police chief Cmdr. Gabi Last announced yesterday.

"Arrest is not a punishment, but should enable police to continue investigations without interference," Last noted.

Last was speaking at a press conference held at the Tel Aviv police headquarters yesterday during which Police Minister Moshe Shahal and Inspector General Assaf Hefetz presented a new plan for police lockups, prepared after complaints of overcrowding, subhuman conditions and poor treatment in such establishments.

An 11-man committee has been working over the past few months to produce a report on the situation in lockups in addition to recommendations for improvements.

The Police Ministry has decided to allocate NIS 14 million to renovate Abu Kabir over a three-year period. The renovations will be carried out in three stages to enable normal functioning of the lockup.

Each wing will be rebuilt and will contain separate dining rooms and exercise yards to enable segregation between different categories of inmates, including informers, the mentally disturbed, first offenders, and debtors. The electrical and plumbing systems will be replaced, and the kitchen and visiting rooms will be renovated, as will the building's exterior.

According to the plan, 95 cells will house 414 inmates - 338 adult males, 39 women, and 37 juveniles. At present, the lockup's maximum capacity is 482 inmates, but in fact many more are incarcerated there, forcing some to sleep on the floor.



Inspector-General Assaf Hefetz (left), Police Minister Moshe Shahal, and Tel Aviv police chief Gabi Last discuss plans yesterday to improve conditions at the country's lockups, especially Abu Kabir, which has been allocated NIS 14m. for renovations. (Ailon Ron/Israel Sun)

3 Israelis held in Belgium in international drug ring bust

RAINE MARCUS

District Court.

Shlomo and David Ben-David were arrested last week in Antwerp for their alleged involvement in smuggling 650 kg. of cocaine.

Belgian police, acting on information supplied by detectives here, kept the cocaine under surveillance until it arrived at the Ben-David's home in Antwerp.

The arrests followed information given to Tel Aviv detectives by Yuval Shemesh, who turned state's evidence last year in a case involving more than a ton of cocaine smuggled from Colombia, which was discovered in a container in St. Petersburg. A gang of Israeli citizens, some who live here and others abroad, were rounded up by Tel Aviv police in cooperation with their counterparts in Colombia, Russia, Holland, and Belgium.

Indyk bids farewell

HILLEL KUTTLER

WASHINGTON

WASHINGTON bade a fond and humorous farewell to Martin Indyk on Wednesday night as he prepared to assume his post as the new American ambassador to Israel.

From a podium in the State Department's ornate Franklin Room, Indyk was ceremonially sworn into his new role. He actually took the oath of office last week before leaving with Secretary of State Warren Christopher and the rest of the peace process team for the Middle East.

National Security adviser Anthony Lake was a master of one-liners, joking that perhaps Indyk's greatest conflict in accepting the post was selling the dashing red convertible sports car Indyk's wife Jill had bought him on turning 40.

Having just stepped off the plane with the rest of the peace process team following a longer-than-usual flight from Syria, Christopher said, "I'm so glad to have made it back for Martin's swearing-in, even more than Martin was happy he came back for his swearing-in."

Indyk delivered an emotional address in which he paid tribute to Lake as "the best boss" he had ever had. The new ambassador is due to arrive, by his own estimate, before Passah.

Court slams army for not supervising pot-smoking unit

EVELYN GORDON

THE High Court of Justice yesterday sharply criticized the army's failure to supervise a Nahal unit in Ofakim, eight of whose members were caught smoking marijuana. It will rule either today or Sunday on whether this justifies removing the case from the military courts' jurisdiction.

The petition was brought by Reuven Amsalem and Hanoah Paz, two of the eight who were indicted in military court. Amsalem was indicted on 17 counts, and Paz on six.

The two want to be tried in Beer-Sheva Magistrates' Court, where they have a good chance of being sentenced to rehabilitation rather than prison, or of having any conviction stricken from their records. A civilian court is also less likely to remand them until the trial's end, which the military court has done.

The petitioners say the army has no right to try them, because, though formally drafted, they were treated as civilians in every respect. The army did not supply their food, housing, or medical insurance; they were forbidden to wear uniforms; they never underwent basic training;

and they were given weekly seminars by a Meretz political counselor.

Worst of all, they were given no supervision, though the army is legally required to appoint a local commander for Nahal units. In the three months of their service, said Amsalem's lawyer, Ra'anan Carmon, they received exactly one two-hour visit from an army officer.

The state argued that the lack of supervision did not excuse the petitioners' drug use, which the army takes very seriously.

Justices Eliezer Goldberg, Dalia Dorner, and Mishael Cheshin agreed that the army has the authority to try the two, but given the "special circumstances," said it might be better to allow the civilian courts to do so.

While the justices were prepared to hear the case as if a show-cause order had already been issued, Arad said she was not sure the state is willing to waive this phase. The court, therefore, gave the state until this morning to decide, and if it agrees, the verdict will also be handed down this morning. If not, a show-cause order will be issued and another hearing will be held Sunday.

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The national unity proposal

PRESIDENT Ezer Weizman's efforts to encourage the formation of a national unity government are undoubtedly animated by his belief that such a government is in the country's vital interest.

It is difficult to argue with this belief. The decisions the government has to make in the coming months may be the most momentous since the establishment of the state. They involve the possible relinquishment of the Golan, an area officially incorporated in sovereign Israel; the evacuation of Judea and Samaria, the heart of the Land of Israel; and the fate of Jerusalem. Inexorably, these decisions will cause drastic changes in Israel's strategic position, and transform its political and economic standing in the world.

That such decisions should be made by a minority government, dependent on the votes of Knesset members who openly declare that their first loyalty is to the Palestinian people, is unpalatable to many, most likely a majority. It would be far more reassuring to the country, and healthier for whatever agreements are reached, if the government did indeed represent a national consensus.

Whether it is within the president's purview to serve as an arbiter between opposition and coalition representatives is irrelevant. If an expansion of the government can be effected as a result of the talks between these representatives, Weizman will have performed an important service. But it is doubtful that the exercise is either realistic or useful.

The leading advocate of the scheme is MK David Levy (Likud), whose feud with his own party's leader Binyamin Netanyahu is as notorious as it is silly. More than any other leading member of the Likud, Levy - who seems totally incapable of being a team player - was responsible for the party's disunity and subsequent defeat in the 1992 elections. This time, too, he is acting in defiance of his own party's policies and without its leadership's consent. It is not

surprising, then, that his current proposal for a Labor-Likud coalition is viewed more as an attempt to undermine Netanyahu, whose impressive showing in the polls undoubtedly perturbs his rivals, than as a serious effort to bring national salvation.

But it would be wrong to judge the proposal by its motive, rather than its merit. Clearly, Levy's basic tenets - opposition to a Palestinian state, the indivisibility of Jerusalem, an uncompromising fight against terrorism, and a refusal to return to the 1967 lines - reflect a broad consensus. In fact, they are remarkably close to the 1992 Labor Party platform and to the political philosophy of The Third Way movement.

The trouble with such tenets is that they are far too general to be relevant at this stage of the Oslo agreement and the Israel-Syria negotiations. Only by addressing the specifics of the government's "land for peace" formula can advocates of a unity government hope to realize their plan. Before any opposition members can join the government, it will have to declare that it will not relinquish military control of Judea and Samaria, nor withdraw from the Golan Heights. But, obviously, it is not prepared to do anything of the kind.

If the Levy initiative has served any useful purpose at all, it is that it has pointed out how remote the government is from the national consensus. Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin likes to tell representatives of opposition parties that he would welcome support inside the government against the pull to the left of his Meretz coalition partners. This is how he enticed Yit'ud Party members into the coalition.

But such support can only apply to minor details. The government has accepted the Meretz blueprint for peace in toto, and only an complete upheaval in the thinking of Labor's leaders can make the party open to a coalition with the right. For all of Weizman's good intentions, his efforts - at this stage, at least - are doomed to failure.

Charter promises

SENIOR Israeli officials have reportedly told Secretary of State Warren Christopher that Yasser Arafat has set a secret timetable for the revision of the PLO charter. According to the report, the platform of Arafat's party in the elections for the Palestinian governing body in the territories will include an announcement of readiness to repeal the charter clauses which call for Israel's destruction.

This is, of course, not the first time Arafat has promised to change the charter. In fact, Israel's agreement to sign the Declaration of Principles was based on a commitment to that effect he made in writing. Last summer, too, he said that within two months after he assumed control of Gaza and Jericho, such changes would be made.

That the promise has not been kept is no minor violation of the accord. Clearly, there can be no trust in the intentions of the PLO as long as the organization's charter calls for dismantling Israel. That the document is still in force is made particularly disturbing by Arafat's repeated references to the PLO 1974 "plan of phases" for Israel's destruction, and his penchant for comparing the Oslo agreement to the "peace of Korish" - an agreement made by the prophet Mohammed which was broken

when his army was strong enough to vanquish the rival tribe of Korish.

Nor is it reassuring to read two documents published only last month by the Palestinian Authority, one called "Jewish Immigration to Palestine and Its Devastating Effects on the Peace Process," the other "Palestinian Refugees and the Right of Return." They not only blame, exclusively, "the Balfour Declaration and the Partition Plan, the racist policy of the British Mandate government, and the brutalities perpetrated by the Jews against the Palestinians" for the Arab refugee problem, they also show not a single hint of willingness to recognize Israel's legitimacy.

This refusal to view Israel as anything but an illegitimate nation and unmitigated villain, and the ritualistic depiction of the Palestinian Arabs as innocent, martyred victims with an unblemished record can only bode ill. It is all too reminiscent of the national martyr complex carefully nurtured by the Nazis and the Soviets. Such views so militate against the cancellation of the charter's offensive clauses that it is doubtful Arafat will be truer to his current "secret agreement" than he has been to his original commitment of September 1993.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

THE ARMENIAN MASSACRE

Sir, - The Armenian community of Jerusalem is outraged by the rubbishing of Armenian charges of a systematic plan by the Ottoman Turks to annihilate their ancient race. It is inexcusable that a Jewish scholar could bring himself to belittle the Turkish massacres of 1915 ("The Armenian catastrophe," February 22).

Yitzhak Kerem, the author of the offending piece, could not have chosen a worse moment to air his distorted version of history. As a curtain-raiser to Armenian Genocide Day (April 24), the date on which Armenians all over the world mourn the victims of the Turkish massacres, Kerem's curious musing is reminiscent of Hitler's infamous aside: "Who remembers the Armenians?" Kerem is contributing to the endless machinations of the enemies of the Armenian people and their diabolical intent to pervert history.

We are in no position to question Kerem's credentials, but we are perplexed and disturbed by the obvious errors in his diatribe. Even the most modest student of history would not have failed to notice several discrepancies and inconsistencies in Kerem's argument. Kerem's attempt at exonerating the Turks is incredible if not pathetic.

Kerem claims that the Armenians were attempting "to overturn the Ottoman empire..." But no one in his right mind can imagine "overconfident and naive Armenian groups" (Kerem's words) posing a

threat to the mighty Ottoman empire that had ruled the world for centuries, much less attempt to overthrow it.

English dictionaries define genocide as "deliberate and systematic extermination of racial or national groups." No figures are stipulated. Whether 1,000 or 1,000,000 are put to the sword, the crime is still genocide. But for Kerem, the deaths of 300,000 Armenians during a Turkish "relocation" in 1917 (his figures), was merely a "tragedy."

"There was no Turkish design to annihilate" the Armenians, he blandly states. "The Armenian massacre of 1915 cannot be equated with the Holocaust."

The Turks destroyed 1.5 million Armenians out of a total population of 4 million - more than one third of the Armenian race: this is not genocide? Calling this genocide is an "exaggeration"?

In civilized countries, any person daring to deny the Holocaust would lay himself open to prosecution. If we are to believe Kerem's arguments, then we might as well believe all those misguided souls who minimize and even deny the Holocaust.

If a historian has theutzpa to deny established facts, then we might as well forget the lessons of history. But how we know how to forgive, we shall never forget.

ARTHUR HAGOPIAN,
Press Officer,
The Armenian Patriarchate
Jerusalem.

LAHAD AT KNESSET

Sir, - I wish to add a few words to your editorial of March 8, "Lahad and the Communists."

First of all, may I apologize to General Lahad and his entourage, on behalf of all decent Israelis, for what they endured during their visit to the Knesset. I am ashamed by the scandalous behavior of communist MK Tamar Gozansky and her Arab colleagues, and bewildered by Knesset Speaker Shevah Weiss's inability to come to their defense and protect them from the ravings of these MKs.

Although most of us have become used to the often repulsive antics of many of our political representatives, the above-mentioned quartet really hit a new low in cynical exploitation of parliamentary prerogatives. It is bad enough when politicians spit and curse, rant and rave among themselves, but to verbally abuse and attack honored guests of the Knesset, who are in no position to defend themselves, is utterly unacceptable. It is just one more indication of the depths of arrogant, insolent depravity these unprincipled public "servants" secure in their immunity, have descended to.

The ugly Israeli does not only vandalize hotels; he is alive and well in top places, casting shame on the country's institutions and sowing demoralization, dissent and disillusionment amongst its long-suffering public - a public forced to pay for these political vandals' continually rising wages with no hope of seeing them punished.

TRUDY GEFFEN
Kiryat Ono.

The Golden Stein



Failure of responsibility

CHAIM HERZOG

THIS week, as I was stuck in a traffic jam caused by the arrival of British Prime Minister John Major in Jerusalem, I recalled how I felt about the situation created during President Clinton's visit. I failed to understand why the president couldn't have been brought from Ben-Gurion Airport to the Wohl Rose Garden by helicopter, leaving the Jerusalem-Tel Aviv highway and the entry to Jerusalem free.

I understand the excessive security measures. But nowhere else in the world have I experienced the complete paralysis of a capital city every time a distinguished visitor from abroad comes to visit. Now that Israel has become fashionable and we have so many of these visits, the situation should be reexamined.

Another aspect of our reception of distinguished guests also bears reevaluation.

It used to be that only rarely were heads of state invited to appear before the Knesset. Such appearances were reserved for historic occasions. The visit by President Sadat, the first visit by President Mitterrand, and a few others come to mind.

Of late, however, it has become the custom to invite all visiting heads of state to address the Knesset.

I believe that such appearances should take place only on occasions of special significance. But if the Knesset has chosen to invite heads of state regularly, it would be helpful for the visits to take place in the cultured and dignified manner characteristic of parliaments throughout the world.

Unfortunately, standards in

our parliament leave much to be desired. At times, the hospitality extended to distinguished visitors can be downright insulting.

For example, attendance of MKs on such occasions averages between one-third and 50 percent.

I well recall how hurt an East-

visitors reciprocal treatment, it might be better to forgo these appearances entirely.

ANOTHER matter which upset me this week was the uproar and the uncontrolled media coverage surrounding the presentation of the annual intelligence evaluation

National courtesy and security - Israelis must pull up their socks

ern European head of state was when he faced the Knesset with only a third of the members present, and only five ministers out of 18 at the government table.

Add to that late arrivals during a visitor's speech, the passing of notes and whispered conversations, and we have an atmosphere which is completely foreign to visitors, who certainly do not expect such behavior.

The recent address by the president of Lithuania had a special significance connected with the tragic Jewish past. It was reasonable to expect that the parliament of the Jewish people would treat such an event appropriately. But it was not to be.

As one who has represented Israel in some 15 parliaments throughout the world, I can testify that Israel and its head of state have always enjoyed the best possible behavior and treatment. The parliaments were invariably packed, with all members of the cabinet in attendance.

If our Knesset cannot give its

to the cabinet by the Directorate of Military Intelligence.

This very important event goes to the roots of our security policy.

The head of military intelligence has been presenting an annual evaluation to the political leadership for the past 40 years, but never can I recall a tumultuous clamor such as we witnessed this year.

As one who served as director of military intelligence in the time of David Ben-Gurion's government, I recall that this evaluation was presented in a secret forum of the General Staff, in the presence of the prime minister and the minister of defense, his personal staff, and the heads of the intelligence community.

The presentation lasted a day, and all possible options and developments were analyzed from a security point of view. No members of the media were ever present; certainly none of them ever leaked a word about the meetings.

What a topsy-turvy situation

exists today. I couldn't believe my eyes when I opened the press and read in detail about what had been presented at this "secret" briefing, when I switched on the television and saw ministers reporting, analyzing, or hinting at all that they had heard.

All this came against the background of debates and varying approaches between different intelligence elements. Worse, we were exposed to an advance billing of what would be presented to the government.

Intelligence work, by its very nature, must proceed out of the spotlight. Never before has there been a case in which elements of a national intelligence evaluation were publicized, with emphasis on the disagreements in the intelligence community. After all, this is just what the enemy is looking for.

If any citizen handed the material published in the press over to the enemy, the full weight of the law would be brought to bear against him.

Clear instructions must go out that anything connected with future intelligence evaluations and the debates over them within the intelligence community must take place before the political leadership in closed rooms.

The current situation augurs ill and reveals considerable weaknesses in discipline, national security, and the authority of the government - not to mention the absence of supervision and reaction on the part of the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee.

The writer was Israel's sixth president.

American maneuvers on the Golan

MOSHE ZAK

AMERICAN diplomacy carried out two maneuvers this week to enable Ambassador Itamar Rabinovitch to meet his Syrian counterpart Walid Mualem in Washington.

The maneuvers weren't in the framework of US military exercises in the Negev over the past few days, but formed part of US mediation efforts between Israel and Syria on the Golan.

● The first maneuver was sending Lt.-Gen. Daniel Christman, assistant to the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, to the Golan. Christman toured the Golan seeking substitutes for essential Israeli security arrangements there.

This signaled the Syrians that America's role as a mediator has changed, and came in sharp contrast to a previous position adopted by the US chiefs of staff.

In June 1967, Gen. Earl Wheeler, then chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, submitted a memorandum to defense secretary Robert McNamara, stating: "The presently occupied territory, the high ground running generally north-south on the line with Kuneitra, 15 miles [24 km.] inside the Syrian border, would give Israel control of the terrain which Syria has used effectively in harassing the border area."

This week's US maneuver succeeded. After Christman's Golan visit, the Syrians deduced that the US will produce its own plans, instead of letting the parties hammer things out for themselves.

● The second maneuver was more sophisticated: Warren Christopher invited opposition leader Binyamin Netanyahu to meet him in Jerusalem before the secretary left for Damascus.

The Likud's traditional policy has been not to use the Americans as a conduit for passing messages regarding the kind of settlement it envisages with the Syrians. They have stuck to the formula of direct Israeli-Syrian negotiations.

But Netanyahu deviated from this policy, and so Christopher could now say to Assad: I have heard what Netanyahu is prepared to offer Syria when he comes to power. Through your uncompromising stance vis-à-vis Rabin, you will lose the opportunity he is offering you.

The Americans scored on this maneuver too. Assad didn't go so far as to back down on any of his

and that "borders should reflect the quality of both security and political arrangements."

This promise is no longer being heard from the Americans, not in public, nor in the diplomatic discussions. The result is that some Israelis have managed to get used to the idea of total withdrawal from the Golan, on the foolish grounds that "the source of power is intellectual, not territorial."

Rabin and Netanyahu got trapped into aiding active US involvement in substantive issues with Syria

demands, but did agree to give Rabin a thread of hope that the talks would be continued in the form of meetings between the respective ambassadors in Washington.

Christopher wants to help Rabin. That is beyond doubt. He has read the opinion polls, and he knows Rabin's problems. Thus a "senior American source" was prepared to declare in public that "Rabin hasn't given in to Assad on any issue in return for the renewal of the talks."

The Americans are trying to defend Rabin from domestic criticism, even at the risk of infuriating Assad.

THESE AMERICAN diplomatic maneuvers served to create an optical illusion of movement in the negotiations - when, in fact, there has been no progress at all.

On the contrary: there has been a regression, not only on the Syrian side, but on the American side too, compared to the achievements at Madrid in 1991.

In Madrid, then president Bush said that "territorial compromise is essential for peace,"

At Madrid, Bush rejected the suggestion that the sides make do with ending the state of belligerence between Israel and the Arab states. He called for "real peace... treaties. Diplomatic relations. Economic relations... Cultural exchange." To all appearances, the Americans are no longer insisting on these conditions.

Three and a half years ago, Syria agreed to begin direct talks with Israel, with no preconditions and without the presence of any foreign parties, including the Americans.

Today the Syrians aren't ready for direct negotiations, insisting on American participation in talks between the ambassadors and the chiefs of staff. Syria's

chief of staff has even refused to shake his Israeli counterpart's hand.

As for the revival of the "ambassadors" formula, this promises no progress in the talks, since Assad will try and squeeze every last drop of concessions he can from a government in difficulties, trying to head off electoral defeat by reaching a settlement.

Assad hears the voices emanating from Jerusalem. They strengthen his bargaining power.

Assad, moreover, isn't being encouraged to reach a quick settlement by Israelis in senior positions, who argue the need to give up the Golan on the grounds that Syria already has 1,000 long-range missiles and "in a missile war, the Golan will have no function."

Israel wants peace for its own sake, not because it is afraid of Syrian missiles. If the missiles threatened Israel's existence, giving up the deterrent of the position facing Damascus would be the wrong thing.

Assad's consummate skill in talks with American foreign ministers is as nothing, compared to his bargaining ability, which is truly worthy of the Damascus bazaar.

The Syrian leader gives the impression that he has all the time in the world, that hurrying him will only jack up the price.

But the government in Jerusalem is in a hurry. It's timetable is tight.

The writer, a veteran journalist, comments on current affairs.

POSTSCRIPT

ONLY IN ISRAEL Dept.: employees of the Police, no matter what department they work in, must take a two-week, high-powered course while in uniform.

Reader Deena Sattler writes that her friend, a petite, youthful religious mother of six, is a police

accountant, and had to take the course. For two weeks she waited every day, in uniform, for a bus near Mea Shearim. An unlikely sight, so you can hardly blame the passerby who asked her if she was dressed for Purim.

Deena Sattler

مكتبة من الامم المتحدة

A common purpose

THE visits of US Secretary of State Warren Christopher and British Prime Minister John Major should have reminded the Israeli opposition that its doctrines and strategies are rejected not by the Israeli leadership alone, but by the entire democratic world.

In particular, the current peace process is a foreign policy objective common to both the US and Israel.

Our two countries have often had common strategies, as they did in the summer of 1967, when our delegations worked together to defeat attempts in the UN to press Israel to withdraw from the occupied territories without requiring the Arab states to conclude peace agreements.

But this common policy was based on "territories for peace," and not permanent Israeli rule over large Arab populations and territories.

THE COMMON purpose that now inspires Israeli and American policies is to pass from the politics of coercion to the politics

ABBA EBAN

of consent.

Since the Likud has no Arab partners for its frankly coercive policies, it will not be able to count on American or European support. The idea of making peace in the Middle East without

From coercion to consensus

Arabs is surrealistically attractive, but pragmatically flawed.

It is incongruous that Likud doctrine sternly enjoin the Arab nations to become democratic in order to earn entry into the world of freedom, but has had no objection to Israel sacrificing its own democratic identity by permanently ruling Gaza and the West Bank.

The US has even taken its pursuit of consent to the point of incurring abrasive relations with its British ally in order to make

gestures toward the most radical Irish nationalists.

No wonder that the lobby of Labor MK Avigdor Kahalani and his Likud allies has failed to secure public congressional support in the US.

The issue of monitoring a Syrian-Israeli peace is premature and marginal at this time, but if the US is asked for this contribution to international stability, it will give an affirmative response, with the new congressional leadership in the forefront of a massive consensus. Secretary Christopher's perseverance illustrates the strength of US support for current Israeli policies.

When the Golan plebiscite takes place, many voters will be reminded that it was the Likud that preempted the issue by its massive and total renunciation in Sinai.

In the strange logic of history, "territories for peace" has evolved into a bipartisan Israeli policy, albeit in two stages.

The writer is a former foreign minister.

In the age of anti-politics

HOW will the recent revelations of political corruption in the Histadrut affect the future of the Labor Party?

A major factor may prove to be how the public feels about politics in general.

With the public participating directly in the political process through primaries, people have come to expect much less from politicians and politicians than they did in Israel's early years. The populist demand is not so much for a higher standard of professional politics, but rather for less politics altogether.

Calling the cops is itself a flight from politics. Using them as an instrument of administrative control is at the same level as turning political issues into legal questions, to be decided by the High Court of Justice. Turning to the police, like petitioning the High Court, is a sign that the ordinary methods of civil control have failed.

In this age of anti-politics, the best public image, from an electoral point of view, is that of the amateur, not the political pro. This is Yitzhak Rabin's secret weapon. (And it may be Binyamin Netanyahu's secret weakness - he is simply too smooth an operator.)

In the public eye, Rabin, whether one agrees with him or not, is an amateur - one of us - in conflict with the political pros, personified in the Labor Party by Shimon Peres.

The moral stigma involved in the events that led to Rabin's departure from office just before the 1977 election upheaval never rubbed off on him. Neither will the recent disclosures. True, Rabin benefited from Yisrael Kessar's primary race, allegedly financed by Histadrut funds, which effectively barred Peres from the top spot on Labor's Knesset list.

However, there is no evidence of a deal, or that Kessar's appointment as transport minister was in any way a payoff. Barring evidence to the contrary, such political shenanigans, in the public perception, are simply not in character for Rabin.

ALLAN E. SHAPIRO

Even without the prospect of the direct election of the prime minister, the public image of the party leader is crucial. But what about the image of the party itself?

IN THE Likud period, appointing political allies to jobs in the civil service was the way to power within the ruling party.

The Labor party machine ain't what it used to be

State Comptroller Miriam Ben-Porat ascribed this disease afflicting "public administration, which she called "an evil sickness," to the dependence of party leaders for their positions on members of the party central committee.

"There are ministers," she declared in an address opening the Faculty of Law at Haifa University on October 10, 1991, "who believe: 'I am so important to the state; what if I sin here and there, and put unsuitable people here and there? The main thing is that I continue to serve the state. And in the end, that is for its own good.'"

At the time, Ben-Porat suggested the adoption of primaries as one possible remedy, although she expressed no opinion on the subject. Today, the suggestion itself sounds like a bad joke.

Politicians continue to believe that it is for the good of the state that they strive so vigorously to achieve and retain public office. But with primaries, political appointments are no substitute for cold cash.

In an earlier time, financial support of Labor and its various antecedents, through the Histadrut, was grounded in ideology. In much the same manner, the British Labour Party was funded through the Trade Union Congress. The revelation of exploita-

tion of Histadrut resources to advance Labor's cause politically would hardly have been considered scandalous, or even newsworthy.

The force of ideology, at least on social and economic issues, has declined across the political spectrum. With it, the importance of the strict observance of rules as rules has also weakened.

In a pragmatic age, rules are handled or dealt with, rather than respected in their own right. The pragmatic tone in public life is one side of the coin. The other is the populist anti-politics belief that politics is intrinsically dirty, and that all politicians steal.

How will the public regard the latest breed of malefactors? As of now, key Histadrut officials appear to have bent the rules for political advancement, not for personal profit. Over time, the public impact is likely to be less than the effect of the scandals that preceded the 1977 upheaval that brought the Likud to power.

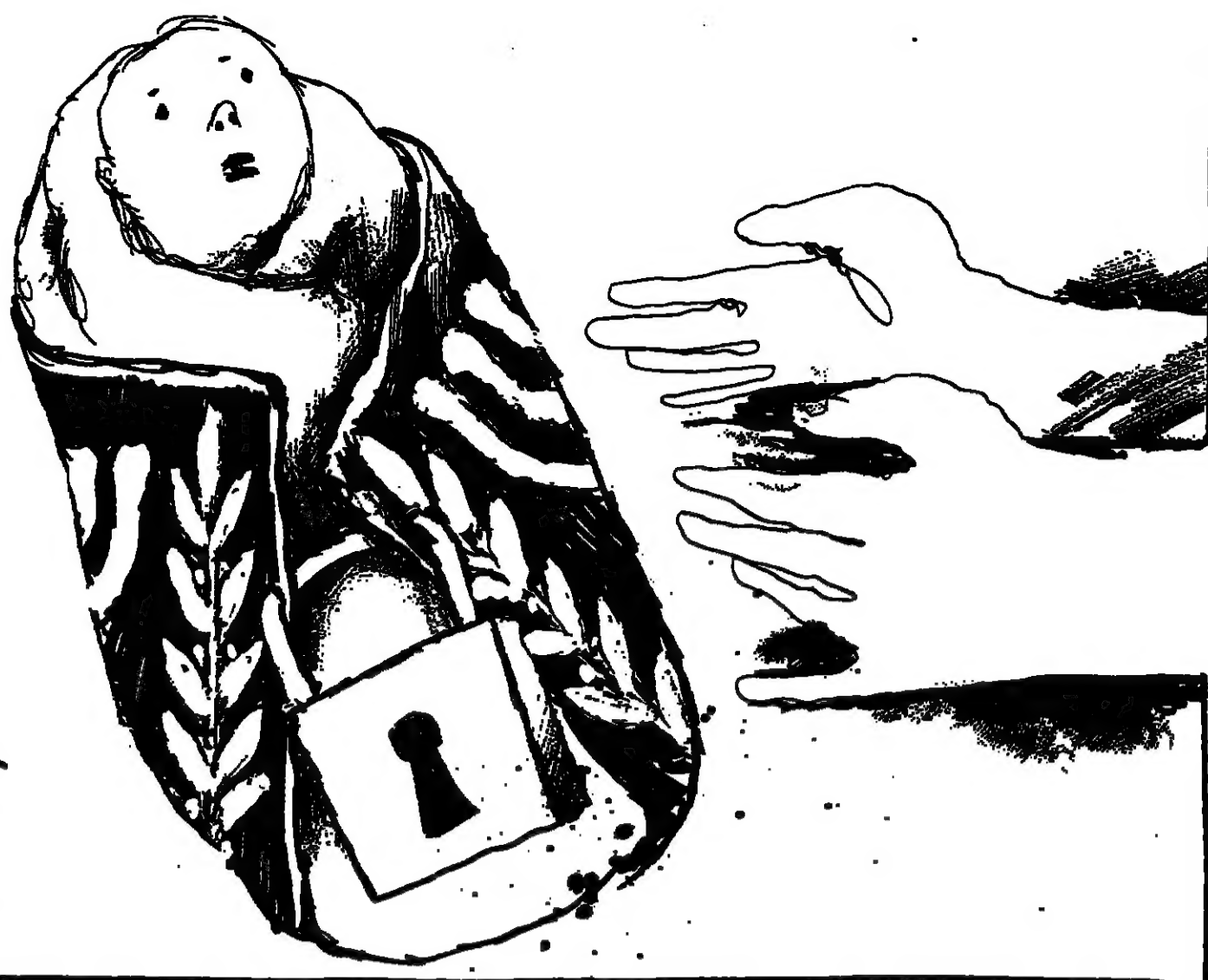
The real threat to Labor in the next elections is not from the present revelations, as such, but rather that the sources of power with which these revelations are concerned will no longer be available.

The "activists" (whose job depended on it) who got the voters to the polls won't be out on election day; the cars won't roll; the political muscle won't be there.

US Supreme Court Justice Felix Frankfurter once defined a political party as an organized appetite. For Labor, the appetite is still there, but the organization isn't what it used to be.

The writer is a legal and political commentator.

OPINION



The adoption cover-up

DAVID BEN-NAHUM

A recent NBC broadcast cited 70,000 as the number of adoptions in the US every year. Since Israel's population is about 50 times smaller than the US's, the number of adoptions by Israeli couples should be around 1,400 a year.

But Israelis seeking to adopt a child have no such luck. The actual number of local adoptions is only about 130 every year. Of that figure, only around 80 are healthy infants.

The reasons for the situation are in sharp dispute. The Service for the Child in the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, which holds the monopoly over adoptions in Israel, claims that the number of local adoptions cannot be raised significantly.

Independent experts, such as Prof. Eliezer Jaffe of the Hebrew University's Baerwald School of Social Work, believe otherwise. They maintain that the government itself is responsible for the apparent "baby shortage," since many babies who could and should be adopted remain in unsuitable homes or institutions.

A governmental monopoly on adoptions, according to these experts as well as the professional literature, causes restrictive thinking, resistance to change, rigid procedures and a deterioration in professional standards. In contrast, statistics show that where there are licensed, non-governmental adoption agencies,

the number of adoptions increases manifold.

Although the state comptroller supported this view in her 1993 report, no changes in Israel's adoption system have been planned, let alone implemented.

Unable to adopt in their homeland, Israelis have been going overseas in increasing numbers since the early 1980s, in search of children to adopt.

The problems involved have been staggering: huge expenses, innumerable hardships, crooked lawyers, corrupt judges, sick children, and adoptive parents who don't know how legal their adoptions are. This leads to horrible tragedies such as the Turgeman case in the 1980s, in which a girl had to be taken away from her adoptive parents and handed back to her biological parents when it turned out that she had been kidnapped.

For many years the government did nothing to ease the situation, in spite of promises to the contrary. Now, seemingly, salvation is here at last, in the form of a proposed amendment to the adoption law. This, according to the government, will render inter-country adoptions easy, straightforward and trouble-free.

THE TRUTH, however, is very different.

Rather than easing the government's monopoly - which independent experts say is the only possible way to improve the adoption situation here - the new amendment will tighten it by legally limiting the role of nongovernmental adoption agencies. These would be allowed to function as information centers only, and not as adoption agencies.

According to the proposed amendment, the ministry's Service for the Child would handle all inter-country adoptions, as well as all local ones - doing as poor (or worse) a job with the former as it does with the latter.

International adoptions are quite common throughout the world; indeed, they are the preferred route in Europe for couples seeking a child. The children are usually released for adoption in their country of origin, then brought to the receiving country and adopted through its courts, according to the local legislation.

In most cases, the adoptions are arranged by government-supervised nonprofit adoption agencies, although there are some independent placements as well.

A supervisory function of this nature is quite appropriate for a democratic government. But monopolistic control of the kind

practiced by the Israeli adoption system can be found only in totalitarian regimes.

If the proposed legislation is approved, Israeli courts will legally effect adoptions based on placements done by individuals in foreign countries, without any effective supervision of the ways the placements were secured. At the same time, licensed nongovernmental placements, which lend themselves much more easily to strict on-the-spot supervision of the adoption process, will be barred.

It is more than likely that this will lead to another "Turgeman case," with an added twist: the illegal adoption will have been sanctioned by an Israeli court.

The situation isn't hopeless. Two MKs, Anat Maor and Limor Livnat, have proposed their own amendments, allowing licensed, nongovernmental adoption agencies to place children and submit home studies.

Most MKs who have expressed a view on the subject seem to support this change - but the ministry is intransigent.

This is where ordinary Israelis come in. If we speak up loudly to our representatives, we can help remove this totalitarian relic from our democratic system.

The writer, who had to go to the US to adopt his two children, is the secretary of the Association for Private Adoption in Israel.

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To register, please contact Yael Gillis at 02-701844 by Wednesday, March 20.

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'Azerbaijan on brink of civil war'

BAKU (Reuters) - Troops guarded key buildings in Azerbaijan's capital Baku yesterday after President Heydar Aliyev said the country was on the brink of civil war and vowed to put down what he called a coup attempt.

Aliyev, speaking on television after three days of unrest in the former Soviet republic, said Deputy Interior Minister Rovshan Javadov was trying to overthrow him by leading a mutiny of the elite OPON police force.

Baku, a city of 2.5 million on the Caspian Sea, was calm. But armed men guarded parliament and government buildings, manned roadblocks and, backed by armored vehicles, surrounded the OPON police's base just outside the city.

"Azerbaijan is again on the brink of civil war," Aliyev said in a televised address to the nation, the third biggest oil producer of the former Soviet republics. He described the events as an attempted "putsch."

"He (Javadov) and his brother have turned the Azeri crack police forces into their own field camp. If the Javadovs do not lay down their arms, the full severity of the law will be used against them," he said.

Aliyev, a former Communist Party leader, said blood had been shed in disturbances this week, but gave no details. The events appear to have unfolded as part of a power struggle.

Interior Minister Ramil Usupov ordered the 3,000-strong OPON police disbanded on Monday after some of its members seized administrative buildings in two towns in the north of Azerbaijan, a country of seven million people bordering Iran.

He said the leaders of the OPON, which is made up of specialized police units, had got out of control.

The local Turan news agency said in an unconfirmed report on Wednesday that dozens of people had been killed in fighting between OPON and government forces in the north of the republic.

Tass said two people were killed in Baku on Wednesday when OPON forces attacked a police station.

Aliyev is trying to bring stability to his country, which has fought a war with Armenian forces over its breakaway Nagorno-Karabakh region and lies in the stormy Caucasus region on Russia's southern fringes.

More riots in Bahrain

NICOSIA (Reuters) - Police in Bahrain used teargas to break up over 100 demonstrators near the capital Manama yesterday.

Witnesses said dozens of riot police were patrolling the area of Sanabis five km west of Manama on alert for further protests, but the main road was open.

There were no reports of arrests or casualties.

Anti-government protests broke out in the Gulf island state in December at the arrest of a fiery young Shi'ite cleric opposed to the government and to demand the restoration of a parliament in 1975.

Protests by the large Shi'ite community resumed early in March after a lull during the Muslim fasting month of Ramadan.

Residents have said one policeman and at least six civilians have been killed during the unrest and hundreds detained. The government has blamed outside provocateurs for the unrest.

About 300 students protested at Bahrain University campus on Tuesday for the second week running, the residents said. Student protests were also reported in two schools.



US astronaut Norman Thagard (left) shares a laugh with Russian cosmonauts (left to right) Elena Kondakova, Gennady Strekalov and Vladimir Dezhnev after boarding Russian space station Mir. Thagard is the first American to board Mir. (AP)

American astronaut docks with Mir

BAIKONUR, Kazakhstan (AP) - Cosmonauts yesterday greeted the first American to fly to the Russian space station Mir with a kiss on the cheek and bear hugs.

Norman Thagard floated into the space station an hour and a half after his Soyuz capsule docked with the large orbiting outpost. As he entered Mir, he was presented with the traditional bread and salt Russian welcome.

The first cosmonaut to reach Thagard, Yelena Kondakova, gave the astronaut a hug and big kiss on the cheek. Two other

cosmonauts also on Mir then embraced him inside the station, where an American flag was draped on a wall in his honor.

"We've been expecting your arrival for some time, and now you are on the station," Mir commander Alexander Viktorenko said.

Thagard, accompanied by Russian cosmonauts Vladimir Dezhnev and Gennady Strekalov, replied in Russian: "I'm glad to be on the station and to see my friends."

Flight controllers at mission control applauded as the Russian-American team

flew into Mir. Nearly 100 NASA employees, including astronauts, stood in the gallery overlooking the control room and also applauded.

"I'd like to bring you greetings from your American friends here and in the United States," Wayne Little, the head of NASA's space flight program, said in a radio message to the space station.

Thagard is the 44th person to visit Mir and the 13th foreigner. He's the first American to be launched on a Russian rocket; the Soyuz blasted off Tuesday.

Shaky Major gives Tories the jitters

LONDON (Reuters) - Britain's Conservatives suffered an attack of jitters yesterday as an ex-party treasurer said a spell in opposition might do them good and speculation about a challenge to Prime Minister John Major resurfaced.

The Sun newspaper said Major could face a contest in annual internal party elections in October if his ruling party did as disastrously in May's local government polls as many experts predict.

The feeling of gloom in the party was compounded by remarks from finance minister Kenneth Clarke which doubted whether Britons would experience the "feelgood factor" resulting from a buoyant economy in time for a general election due by 1997.

The Conservatives, 25 points behind the opposition Labor Party in the latest opinion poll, are defending more than 3,700 council seats in elections all over England and Wales on May 4.

The Sun quoted an unnamed senior party figure as saying: "If we lose more than 1,000 seats in these elections, the pressure will be on for a new leader."

A BBC poll on Sunday predicted Conservative losses of 1,350 seats, putting them third behind the minority Liberal Democrats and Labor in local government.

At a news conference to launch the party's local election campaign, party chairman Jeremy Hanley declined to make a prediction of the outcome.

Meanwhile, in an interview with the magazine *New Statesman* and *Society*, former Conser-

vative treasurer Lord McAlpine accused Major of having ruined the party's prospects.

Speaking of the prime minister, McAlpine said he had "nothing against the chap personally." He added: "He's never done me any harm, except stuff up the Conservative Party."

Asked whether he was saying he wanted the party to go into opposition after more than 15 years in power, he said: "I am. I think it's healthy...it's taking a sabbatical."

The Conservatives, deeply unpopular after breaking a 1993 general election pledge not to raise taxes, have been hoping that the return to strong economic growth in Britain will boost their popularity ahead of the next election, due by May 1997.

Simpson jury hears the slur but little else

LOS ANGELES (AP) - The jury that includes eight blacks finally heard a racial slur against blacks in the O.J. Simpson murder trial, but not from the mouth of the detective accused of uttering it.

At least seven times defense attorney F. Lee Bailey grilled Mark Fuhrman about the word "nigger." Each time, Fuhrman denied using the word that Simpson's lawyers are trying to pin on him.

Simpson has pleaded innocent to charges he murdered his ex-wife, Nicole Brown Simpson, and her friend Ronald Goldman.

Asked point-blank if he used the word to describe people, Fuhrman - who didn't even use the word in his testimony - responded with a firm yet simple, "No."

"You say under oath that you have not addressed any black person as a nigger or spoken about black people as niggers in the past 10 years. Detective Fuhrman?" said Bailey, his voice rising to a roar. "That's what I'm saying, sir," Fuhrman answered.

The defense has accused Fuhrman of framing Simpson by planting evidence, possibly out of racial

hatred. Outside court, Bailey said the defense would produce people to contradict Fuhrman.

"Let thousands of witnesses come forward," Bailey said at a news conference.

Nearly lost in the day was any indication that it is 47-year-old Simpson who is on trial, accused of the June 12 murders of his ex-wife Nicole Brown Simpson and her friend Ronald Goldman.

"What we have now is two trials going on here," Loyola University law professor Laurie Levenson said. "One is about who killed Nicole Brown Simpson and Ronald Goldman. The second trial is about whether Mark Fuhrman is a racist, and did he plant evidence on O.J. Simpson? Somehow, we're getting more on Fuhrman than anything else."

Before Fuhrman took the stand, Bailey and prosecutor Marcia Clark clashed over whether the defense was fabricating its claims of racism against Fuhrman. Clark called Bailey a liar and produced a videotape of a TV interview in which potential defense witness Max Cordoba denied ever talking to Bailey. On Tuesday, Bailey said he spoke to Cordoba and clarified this.

Bosnian Serbs fire on British peacekeepers

SARAJEVO (AP) - The United Nations yesterday accused Bosnian Serbs of deliberately targeting British peacekeepers as fighting increased around Sarajevo and the combatants predicted more war.

A British patrol came under "deliberate and sustained" machine gun and cannon fire from Bosnian Serb positions near the eastern Muslim enclave of Gorazde, UN spokesman Maj. Herve Gourmelon said.

The UN requested increased NATO air presence in the area and a UN rapid response team was dispatched to the scene. It also came under fire, he said. The peacekeepers, who returned more than 400 rounds of small arms fire, were able to escape only after nightfall.

"There will be certainly a protest sent today" to the Bosnian Serbs, UN spokesman Lt. Col.

Gary Coward said. A UN engineering team also came under fire in the southwest - Gourmelon said earlier the incident happened in north-central Bosnia. The origin of fire was unknown, Coward said.

The incidents followed a pattern of harassment of peacekeepers in recent weeks as a four-month truce progressively deteriorated. UN vehicles and equipment have been hijacked, and Serbs have refused to allow aid convoys to the region.

The last convoy reached Bihac Feb. 28. Fighting and sniping picked up in and around Sarajevo Wednesday and overnight. A 62-year-old woman was wounded by sniper fire yesterday morning.

Two people were wounded in the western suburb of Stup, probably from Serb fire, UN spokesman Maj. Pierre Chavany said. A Serb soldier was wounded in the head by sniper fire on the outskirts of the city and later died. Chavany quoted a local Serb commander as threatening retaliation.

Two civilians were also wounded on a road over Mount Igman, south of the capital, which came under sustained fire from Serb anti-aircraft guns.

The treacherous mountain road within range of Serb guns is the only land route out of Sarajevo. Earlier this week, Serbs closed a civilian route out of the city that links up with the Mount Igman road and government-held territory beyond.

EU, Canada seek solution to fishing dispute

BRUSSELS (Reuters) - European Union and Canadian officials, on speaking terms again after Ottawa released a Spanish trawler, held talks yesterday to try to resolve their bitter fisheries dispute, but major problems remained.

The trawler Estai, seized in international waters off Canada a week ago for what Canadian authorities alleged was overfishing, sailed early yesterday from St. John's, Newfoundland, after payment of a \$500,000 Canadian (NIS 1.1 million) bond.

"We hope (the talks) will soon lead to an agreement," said European Commission spokesman Nikolaus van der Pas.

But Spain said there were still deep differences between the two sides.

"The political and juridical problem continues," Spanish Agriculture and Fisheries Minister Luis Atienza told a radio interviewer in Spain. "It is essential that full international legality is restored."

Van der Pas said conditions for a resumption of contacts between senior officials had been fulfilled with the release of the Spanish vessel.

The fact that the shipowner paid a fine was his individual decision and had nothing to do with the EU position, he said.

"It doesn't imply any EU acceptance of the Canadian (legal) position," he said.

The EU had earlier demanded the unconditional release of the vessel, which Canada charged was loaded with undersized Greenland halibut (turbot). It was in international waters off Newfoundland's Grand Banks fishing grounds.

The aim of yesterday's bilateral talks was to prepare a multilateral deal at a meeting of the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organisation (NAFO) in Brussels from March 22 to 24.

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A memorial service for Rabbi MYER (Sonny) BENJAMIN

formerly of Cape Town who passed away on February 21, 1995, will be held on Wednesday, March 22, at 7:30 p.m., at Beit Haknesset Beit Daniel, 62 Bnei Dan Street, Tel Aviv. All are welcome.

The Family

The Rockman and Gordon families and Hadassah Bat Haim would like to express their gratitude for the sympathy and comfort they received, on the death of their son and grandson

DANIEL ROCKMAN

aged 20 and for the contributions to the education fund, set up in his name. The shloshim will be observed at Mt. Herzl at 2 p.m. on March 20, 1995.

A memorial stone will be dedicated in memory of our beloved

wife, mother, grandmother and sister

BELLA RACHEL SAMET

(daughter of Shlomo ז"ל)

on Sunday, March 19, 1995 at 3:45 p.m. (II Adar 17, 5755) at the Savoyon cemetery.

The Family

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and extend condolences to his family.

Dr. Alfred Gottschalk President

Dr. Michael Klein Dean, Jerusalem Campus



Mizrahi - Hapoel Hamizrachi World Organization - Jerusalem

The leadership and members of World Mizrahi mourn the loss of

Rabbi LOUIS BERNSTEIN ז"ל

President of the Religious Zionists of America. He was a great leader and spokesman for Mizrahi and World Jewry, a great fighter for Religious Zionism and Torah values, and a great inspiration to all who came into contact with him. His wise counsel will be sorely missed. Our deepest sympathy to his family. May his memory be a blessing.

Dr. Josef Burg World President MK Zevulun Hammer Co-President Kurt Rothschild World Chairman Sofy Sacks Director-General

NEWS IN FOCUS

FRIDAY, MARCH 17, 1995

Portrait politics: Signs of the times in Damascus

Bashar Assad is learning the family business, even as Syria is awash with posters extolling his dead brother. David Makovsky reports from Damascus

WHEN US Secretary of State Warren Christopher walked through the front door of the Damascus Sheraton this week in a bid to resume negotiations between Syria and Israel, he was greeted by a picture of Assad. Not President Assad, but his son who died in a car crash last year, the presumed successor of the Alawite regime. 32-year-old bearded Basil.

In Syria he is called a martyr, as if he died in the name of Islam, when in fact he was speeding in his Mercedes 500 on a foggy, wet day in January 1994.

The veneration of Basil is more visible in death than it was in life. A near cult of personality has arisen, a change I noticed this week since my last time there, covering President Clinton's visit in October. Not far from the Sheraton is now a Basil Assad Street. There is now a Basil Assad hospital, and Basil Assad school dormitories.

On the outskirts of town, on the road leading to the airport, the same road where he met his death, there are now plenty of signs of Basil.

(The only other significant signs on this road are pictures of the president with pro-peace slogans in Arabic saying: "We fought in dignity, we will make peace in dignity." Western diplomats say the same signs are on the Damascus-Beirut highway, suggesting they are not mounted there only for the benefit of Western Arabic-speaking visitors.)

There have always been pictures of Basil on the back of taxis, store windows, the main Omayyad mosque and the Hamidiye market, but there has now been a proliferation beginning with the anniversary of his death two months ago.

I saw more pictures of Basil this time than I saw of his father. There is even a sign in Damascus that calls President Assad "Abu Basil."

Many say the pictures remain in full force due to genuine affection, while some hint that people are afraid to be the first to take their pictures down after the anniversary.

If people remember Basil fondly, it may be because the Syrian government is cultivating the image of him as someone who tried to root out corruption. Basil, it was rumored, stopped some of the Lebanese drug trade from the Bekaa Valley to Syria. (Many believe Assad could stop drug trade if he wanted to, but this is a revenue producer for him. Syria is on the State Department list of states involved in narcotics.)

While Basil was characterized as a



Damascenes mourn the death of Hafez Assad's son, Basil, in February 1994; now they venerate him. (AP)

reformer, his taste for womanizing and his love of cars - there have been reports that he owned 40 cars - was hidden from the public view.

More than a year after his death, a senior Western diplomat explained why he thought the Assad regime was seeking to capitalize on the adulation of Basil. "The government sees affection for Basil, and wants to be identified with it," he said, adding that there are hopes it will rub off by generating public support for Assad's second son, Bashar, 29.

Indeed, though there are very few pictures of Bashar, signs have been spotted in Damascus linking the two, saying: "Basil is the Martyr, Bashar is the Hope."

Bashar seems different from his brother. Shy and soft-spoken, he does not share Basil's gregariousness. Unlike his hot-rod brother, Bashar reportedly drives a modest Japanese car. Basil was a military officer; Bashar studied ophthalmology in London.

Things began to change for Bashar after his brother's death. He is now training in a military institution; affiliation with the military is a prerequisite for influence. According to sources in Damascus, Bashar has just completed a shortened tank commander's course at the Homs military academy, north of Damascus, graduating as an officer. Some claim to have seen Bashar in Damascus wear-

ing a military uniform in public, but this cannot be confirmed.

While Bashar is low-profile, senior Western diplomats believe he is being groomed for influence, if not succession. His image is already being shaped along the lines of his brother, depicted as a decent-minded reformer.

One account has it that Bashar ensured the arrest of a powerful general who stormed the home of a woman who had spurned him.

Stories have been circulating that Bashar has been stymieing efforts by Information Minister Mohammed Salman and others to get rid of the satellite dishes that are sprouting up.

Whether the rumor is true is less

significant than the fact that it was believed. A boom in sales has occurred in the last several months, the other most visible change since my last visit in October. Western diplomats say there are at least 10,000 satellite dishes in Syria, with others putting the figure at over 100,000.

Foreign Minister Shimon Peres loves to say that satellite dishes in Eastern Europe brought an end to the Cold War, but even assuming that nothing as earth-shattering will happen in Syria, the implications are profound for how Syrians think in the future. At minimum, by receiving information from 40 stations around the world including CNN and even Israel Television, Syrians know much more about what is going on than when they were totally reliant on official dailies like *Tishrin* and *al-Thawra*.

Whether Bashar - who until last year wanted only to be an eye doctor - would be fit to ultimately take over from his father is unclear. (Incidentally, according to the Syrian constitution one must be at least 40 to be president.)

While the 66-year-old Hafez Assad has suffered from heart and diabetes problems for more than a decade, he still had the stamina to engage in five-hour sessions with Christopher this week.

While succession is not discussed publicly, it is on people's minds. A senior Western diplomat said Bashar is definitely gaining influence, but nobody should count on him to be the successor. Some have looked to someone outside Assad's family but part of his inner circle, namely the chief of the military, Hikmet Shihabi, who led aborted security talks with Ehud Barak in Washington last December.

Other names mentioned for succession are Vice-President Abdel Khalim Khaddam, along with a couple other top military officers.

If Assad is busy grooming Bashar, he may be concerned with more than merely perpetuating the family name and Alawite rule. More than anyone else, Assad knows - because he was partly responsible for the fact - that during much of the 1950s and '60s, there were coups and counter-coups in Syria by a variety of factions, ending once and for all after Assad gained control in 1970.

While Assad's singular grip on Syria shows no signs of slipping, he remains suspicious. It is told that when disgruntled Syrian officials came to Assad's home to notify him very early one morning last year about Basil's sudden death, but had difficulty in actually breaking the news, Assad blurted out "is the army in revolt?"

Assad may do all in his power to retain family rule, but he can never be completely sure he will meet with posthumous success. As an Arab proverb known in Syria says, "When the king's son dies, everyone goes to his funeral. But when the king dies, no one bothers to come."

David Makovsky, diplomatic correspondent of The Jerusalem Post and the first Israeli journalist to make an authorized visit to Damascus, made his third trip to the city this week, traveling with Secretary of State Warren Christopher. Thanks to senior Clinton administration intervention with senior Saudi officials, Makovsky also became the first Israeli journalist to visit Saudi Arabia.

Peace stakes are rising

THE key development on the Israel-Syria peace front this week is that the US has decided to become a mediator instead of a mailman.

No longer content to pass messages between the parties, the US has pledged a more activist role in the talks, a position publicly underscored this week by President Clinton himself.

It seems that the US has settled on a type of ratcheting-up strategy, whereby parties bridge as many gaps as they can before the level and character of the talks are boosted.

The renewed Washington talks on the all-important issue of security arrangements that will begin in a week or two are designed to identify conceptual and technical differences between Israel and Syria and thus enable each side to understand the positions of the other. Beyond this, the sides can close gaps themselves - after the US points out where positions overlap. Washington has already indicated it would be putting forth options and proposals on how these gaps can be bridged.

The problem is that the negotiators in Washington are of the ambassadorial level. However capable, they are not the principals themselves. Prime Minister Rabin or President Hafez Assad; therefore, their mandates to make a deal are likely to be limited.

After this next set of talks is exhausted, there may be other maneuvers, but negotiations will probably culminate in a Camp David summit involving Rabin or Assad. Therefore, the stakes will probably rise further, in what may be called negotiations by the process of elimination.

Indeed, there has been a slow raising of stakes. After the Madrid peace conference, there were large delegations that achieved precious little: informal talks followed with one top negotiator on each side, which gave each side more freedom to probe the parameters of the other side, with the US sitting in as observers.

The new phase this week changes the negotiations from two-way sessions with notes being passed, to a full-fledged three-way affair, Rabin's denials notwithstanding.

What will be the impact of the US becoming more involved, as far as Israel is concerned?

There are two substantive aspects to US involvement. On those issues that Israel wants to concede anyway, there may be advantages that concessions come from the US.

As former foreign minister Abba Eban recalled about US-brokered negotiations in the '70s, "sometimes we wanted ideas to come from a third party. This may be due to our internal domestic situation or it may be that Arabs would accept the same ideas, but would reject them if they came from us."

Eban is a firm believer that without US intervention today, a peace deal will not be struck. "It may be easier for Assad to accept full normalization with Israel if it came from the US, and not volunteered by himself," he said. "The same for us when it comes to the extent of Israeli withdrawal from the Golan."

There will be times when US and Israeli positions are at variance, as might be the case with the issue of US-manned early-warning stations on the Golan. Israel does not want to be dependent on the US for intelligence data.

Differences are likely to remain after these Washington talks. Then at some point thereafter, Clinton Administration officials have hinted the US may invite Assad and Rabin to a Camp-David style summit. That would have to happen this year, as both Israel and the US will be mired in elections in 1996.

A summit may be high stakes. But the offer will be hard to refuse - not only because invitations would be issued by Clinton, but because each party will have been told that all other options have now been exhausted. D.M.

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A request to transfer to another fund may be submitted at any time, but such transfers will be effected only once every six months.

A person who, in any year, submits a request to transfer by September 30, will be transferred, effective the following January 1. A person who, in any year, submits a request to transfer by March 31, will be transferred, effective the following July 1.

A request to be transferred can be canceled, up to 60 days from the date on which it is scheduled to come into effect.

Such a request should be submitted to the sick fund you wish to join.

NATIONAL HEALTH INSURANCE LAW

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Syrian fog clears as talks near

Delays in the peace talks obscured whether Hafez Assad was serious about them, but this week's agreement to meet again improved visibility for IDF intelligence. Alon Pinkas reports

THE intelligence community knows that Syrian President Hafez Assad's priorities include preserving Alawite control in Damascus and guaranteeing that his son succeeds him. But it finds his strategic policy, the prime element in Assad's regime, perplexing.

Each year since 1992, the IDF Intelligence Branch reported, "Assad has clearly made a strategic choice and committed himself to peace." But with peace talks stalled for six months, the branch reexamined Assad's intentions.

The branch's Annual Intelligence Assessment for 1995 - released this week as US mediation jump-started Israel-Syria negotiations - repeats the earlier estimation of Assad's commitment to the peace process. It also notes that Assad "is in no rush and seems not to place importance on the time factor. He is willing to negotiate, but will not compromise on getting the entire Golan Heights back."

"What we were looking for this year, and which we could not find, were indications that he is intent on this [peace] process and willing to negotiate seriously," a senior intelligence branch officer says. After this week's developments, however, he noted, "Maybe that will change now."

Indeed, the past week's shuttle diplomacy by US Secretary of

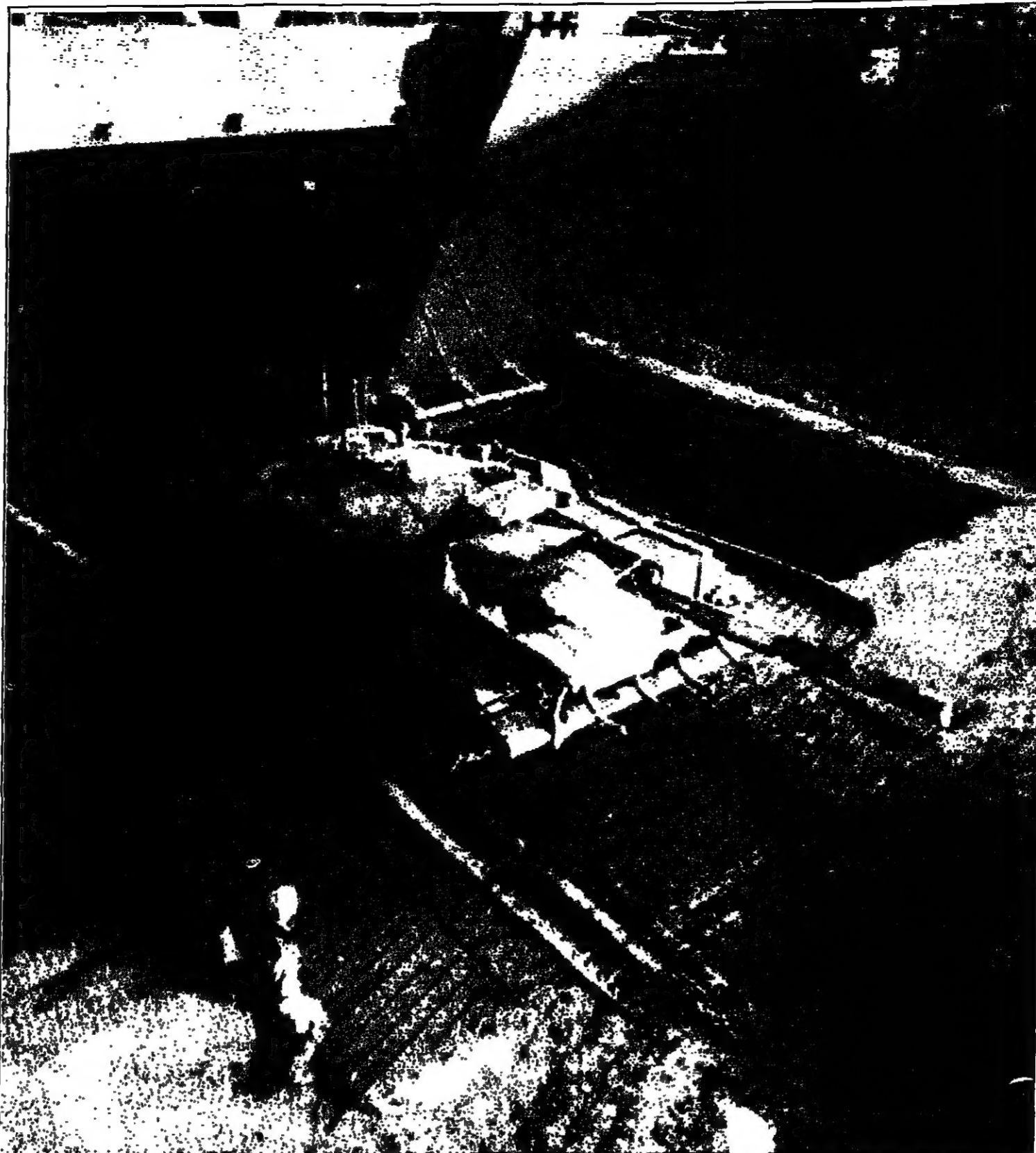
State Warren Christopher pushed the sides to schedule the renewal of talks this month.

The annual assessment is the most comprehensive and distilled expression of what officials here think of strategic developments in the region and of how the peace process is progressing. It also considers what Syria is up to, what its interests are and which strategic course it is taking.

The branch is not expected to decipher Syria's intentions but, rather, its capabilities. When a country's decision-making process is undemocratic, as in the case of Syria, there is no way to predict how it will act. So the branch is limited to discerning patterns of political behavior, determining the other side's perceptions of reality and suggesting possible action for Israel.

"War is not a viable option" for Syria, the senior source says. "Things could change, but they also understand that an agreement with Israel, possibly involving a demilitarized Golan, further diminishes any possibility of surprise attacks in the Golan."

(There is one possibility which seems to have escaped intelligence branch: Assad may not be interested in regaining the Golan. Getting the territory back would not help him preserve his regime, because he has to maintain his role as the country's un-



A Soviet-built tank bound for Syria in 1992: The intelligence branch assesses Syria's capabilities, but not its intentions. (AP)

bending, uncompromising leader.) Decision makers are not

obliged either to accept the branch's assessment or to shape their policies to it, the officer

says, and that has been Yitzhak Rabin's approach: "This prime minister said on several occasions

that he usually does not accept the assessment as a kind of dictum, because he has had

bad experience with it in the past.

"Our prime duty and professional obligation is to present reality as accurately as possible," another intelligence officer says. "If our estimation is that Syria's basic policies and priorities have not changed, we must say so loudly and clearly. How policy makers understand the assessment is not my business."

Dissenting views are heard in the deliberations on the final draft, which include participants from the Mossad and the Foreign Ministry, whose views are integrated into the annual assessment.

The Agranat Commission report into the intelligence failure before the Yom Kippur War recommended that dissenting views be heard in the intelligence community. Now, pluralism ostensibly exists, but assessments are rarely daring intellectually and generally do not deviate sharply from conventional wisdom.

But the branch is, after all, run like any military unit, so its top-ranking officers hold sway in formulating the assessment.

That is why the main findings regarding Syria in the annual assessment have not changed since 1992, the first assessment to follow the 1991 Madrid Peace Conference. But this also explains why the annual assessments have failed to reconcile what they discern as Syria's strategy and Assad's actual policies.

In 1993 and 1994, the branch determined that "Assad is intent on peace." They stated that Syria is "determined to extricate itself from the war circle" and defined as "a prime strategic interest improving relations with the US." The annual assessment also suggests that the probability of war between Israel and Syria remains low for the foreseeable future.

These are points which branch chief Maj.-Gen. Uri Saguy has long argued. "Assad's view of the changing world," he said several weeks ago, "and Syria's lack of superpower patronage once the Soviet Union disintegrated led him to reassess Syria's strategic options, to admit failure in attaining strategic parity with Israel and to begin a process of peace intended to improve relations with the US." He has said similar things last year and the year before. Consistency is not a flaw or a mark of intellectual superficiality in the intelligence assessment business.



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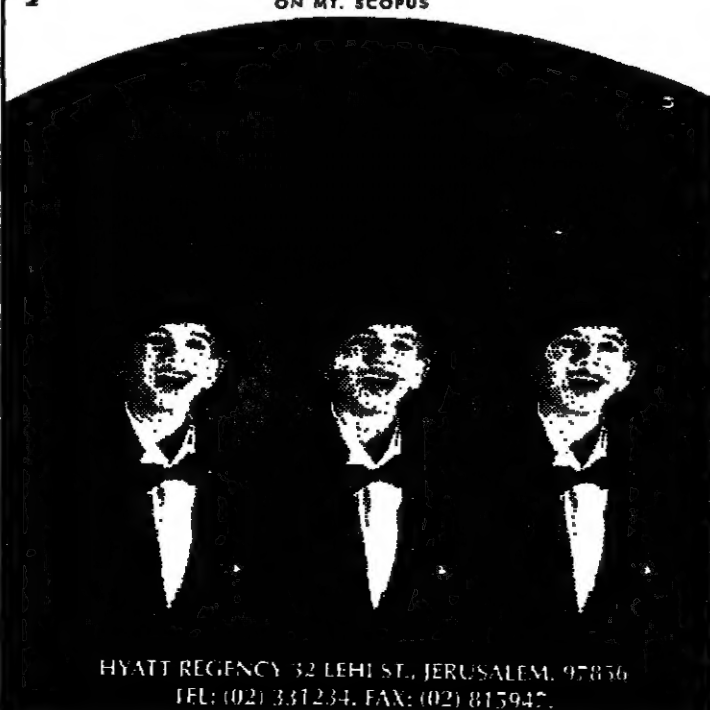
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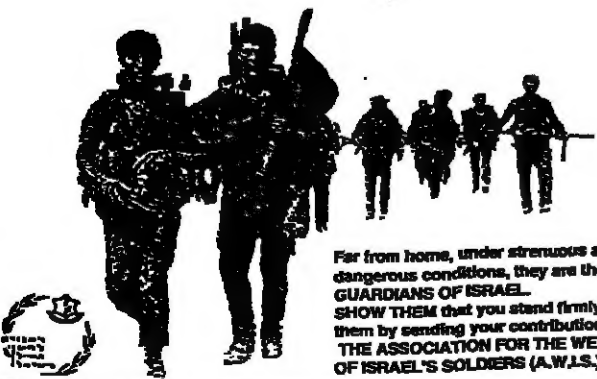
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In time of peace, war on 'collaborators' continues

WHEN Ahmed Barham leaves his home, in a Jewish suburb of Jerusalem, he often calls a special phone number and waits for an all-clear from security men in the area. After years of helping Israel, he has been rewarded with an apartment, an allowance and a fear of sudden death.

The peace process was supposed to bring amnesty for *me-shafei pe'ula* ("collaborators"). But the people who made a pact with Israel long before Oslo are being displaced, hunted and sometimes desperate.

Security officials talk about "hundreds" who have moved to Israel. The exact number is classified. Ahmed Hamarsheh, former mukhtar of the Fahme collaborators' camp near Jenin, put the figure - including wives and children - at 5,000 or more.

Barham insists the number is at least twice as large. Nearly all have relocated since Oslo, most have received Israeli citizenship, the rest are in the process of getting it, he says.

Palestinians fleeing the PLO and Hamas are now living all over Israel. Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, Haifa, Beersheba, Afula, Nahariya, Nazareth, Acre and Beit She'an are some of their new homes.

The two large collaborator camps, Fahme and Dahiniye near Rafiah, have been almost emptied, and Dahiniye has begun re-

filling with new arrivals.

At least 73 alleged collaborators have been killed since the Oslo accords 18 months ago. Collaborator sources report that Mohammed Aboudi in Yaabed was bludgeoned to death by his own family on Monday. Zaki Amouni was ambushed near Kabatiyeh in a murder attributed to agents of Preventive Security chief Jibril Rajoub two weeks ago. More than 830 have died as alleged collaborators since the intifada began seven years ago.

Some Israelis are worried that the proximity of the state's endangered agents from the territories now endangers them. "What if the 18-year-old son of a collaborator decides to purify his name by killing a Jew?" asked a Jerusalem resident who found such a family living anonymously upstairs. "What if Hamas attacks the kindergarten attended by the child of a suspected collaborator murdered by Hamas?" asked a parents' committee in Afula.

Hannie Yeshurun, the spokeswoman of the government coordinator in the territories, considers most fears unfounded. "It never happened that the children of collaborators suddenly became anti-Israeli. The families are well-checked by the security services." But, she admits, the GSS is not infallible. "Anything is possible."

BARHAM, ONE of the most

Palestinians who made deals with Israel still aren't sure where they belong, Jon Immanuel writes

wanted collaborators in Palestinian security files, lives with his wife and three children in Jerusalem, but is frequently alone. His family spends a lot of time in Jericho, where his eldest son, aged seven, goes to a PA-run school.

Barham says this is his choice and that his family has not deserted him. He has no fear that they will be attacked or even ostracized. But he left Jericho, his hometown, when the Palestinian Authority arrived and has not been back, fearing immediate arrest there by Jibril Rajoub.

Rajoub seems to enjoy the fear he inspires. "I have received phone calls from collaborators in Tel Aviv offering to kill Israelis. Of course, I tell them to go to hell," he added, while scanning the channels of his office TV with a flick of his remote control.

Rajoub denies assertions by security forces that he arranged the murders of about 10 collaborators in the Tulkarm-Nablus area since arriving from Tunis eight months ago. But because he was a leading local Fatah leader before being deported to Tunis, his reach - now strengthened by his

official position - extends far beyond Jericho.

How long will the hundreds, maybe thousands of families, be content to remain in virtual anonymity, rejected by Palestinian society and on the fringes of Israeli society? Few have normal work, Barham says.

"If I work on a building site and one of the Arab workers recognizes me, I'm finished," Barham says. At the same time it is difficult to work among Jews. "An Arab will always remain an Arab. After an incident, a Jew doesn't think this Arab might have saved 100 Jews. He thinks, 'He's an Arab.'"

The result is that Barham, a car mechanic by training, says he and others work in the only job where they consider themselves protected and valued.

Barham received an apartment in a Jerusalem suburb, a NIS 3,000 monthly allowance and another NIS 3,000 for continuing "security" work, mostly by telephone with contacts in the territories, he says.

Hamarsheh says the situation in the north is different. He knows alleged collaborators

working in restaurants, hotels and wholesale markets. He is a successful used-car salesman.

Few collaborators, all of whom may receive Israeli citizenship, go all the way and apply to convert to Judaism. Hamarsheh, now living in a Jewish suburb north of Haifa, says he knows of nine heads of families who have converted. "It is not usual. I think they converted because they were tortured so badly by their own people that they hate them."

Barham has a mezuzah on his front door, a menorah on his TV set and a "Purim" picture of his son in IDF uniform, but they're just decoration. He remains Moslem, but is motivated to help Israel, he says, by his respect for peace, law and order, which only Israel can provide in the territories.

Living among Jews, he will respect their customs. Also, not having a mezuzah on his unmarked door could arouse suspicion about the identity of the man inside.

Collaborators often define themselves as Israeli Arabs. "I would not go to the West Bank

now. The Palestinians do not honor the Oslo agreement that collaborators be pardoned. I could be murdered." But it has been in the Israeli-Arab community where they have experienced the most rejection. Most collaborators now live in Jewish areas, although their children mostly attend Arab schools.

Hamarsheh blames MK Haim Hamarsheh of the Democratic Front for Peace and Equality, for calling collaborators "traitors who should be hanged." Clearly, Israeli-Arab politicians see baiting collaborators as a potential vote-winner.

THE FACT that the PLO itself is obliged to help Israel fight terrorism has not helped collaborators in Gaza. It has made their situation worse in some ways, because the PA is very sensitive to opposition charges that its commitment against violence amounts to collaboration.

Collaborators are still enemy No. 1 and can conveniently be accused of trying to destabilize the authority. This happened after 13 people died in November's clash between Hamas and the PLO at the Palestine Mosque. Both sides blamed collaborators and avoided escalating the violence.

Yasser Arafat decreed the establishment of "security courts" to try those who helped attack Israelis, but he was shocked when

Palestinian human rights groups warned him that they would be illegal if used to try anyone but collaborators.

Consequently, the PA Justice Ministry announced that the courts' first trials would be of collaborators.

The result has been that many pre-Oslo collaborators have left the protected Dahiniye camp in the Gaza Strip for Beersheba, while new alleged collaborators have moved in.

Yasser A., a 16-year-old, says his family of 12 left their Rafiah home one January night when masked men came and threatened his father for collaborating.

Yasser, who calls himself Yossi, denies the charges. Most of the Dahiniye residents are Beduin and they claim they are hated by Palestinians for that reason.

"We don't see ourselves as Palestinians. We are Beduin like the Beduin who live in Israel, but we are not collaborators," says Jazal Taribje, who works in a factory near Beersheba.

Forty families live in Dahiniye; there were 100 a year ago. Taribje says he does not want to leave the camp, where he has a five-room plasterboard shack. The many street urchins running barefoot demanding money from any stranger shout, "We don't want Israel. We don't want Palestine. We want a state of Dahiniye."

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Shetreet begins his post-Shas cleanup campaign

The new minister of religious affairs hopes to reform the secular public's least loved ministry, Herb Keilon writes

THOSE who thought newly appointed Religious Affairs Minister Shimon Shetreet was just keeping the minister's swivel chair warm until Shas decides to rejoin the coalition have been proven wrong.

Shetreet, in office for less than three weeks, has already replaced two of the ministry's most senior officials, frozen allocation of funds until new criteria are drawn up, and declared his intention to open the ministry's doors to the public as wide as possible.

Shetreet has clearly entered into the swing of his new job. His confidants say he is motivated by a long history of cleaning up public administration.

Critics, however, question the purity of his motives. Israel Lippel, a 16-year veteran of the ministry whose tenure was abruptly curtailed by Shetreet, claimed in a television interview that Shetreet is using the ministry to build himself up for the Labor primaries.

There is a certain logic, Shetreet supporters admit, to this claim. The Religious Affairs Ministry is arguably the least loved ministry among the secular public. If Shetreet can make changes in the ministry – or create the impression that he is making changes – it will serve him well at the ballot box.

Lippel meant his criticism as a barb. But a source close to Shetreet insists that making changes to impress the public is not necessarily a point against the minister. "He is ambitious," the source says. "But in the end you have to ask yourself whether he can do what needs to be done."

SHETREET HAS taken over the min-



Despite new budgetary criteria, the yeshivot are not worried their funding will be cut off, according to MK Avraham Ravitz. (G. Feinblat/Media)

istry at a difficult time: It is currently racked by allegations of misappropriation and fraud. On the basis of the as yet unpublished 1995 Comptroller's Report, The National Fraud Squad has begun investigating two departments in the ministry. The allegations center around claims that Shas played fast and loose with budget criteria to favor organizations close to it.

In light of the Comptroller's Report, and similar reports critical of religious affairs allocations from years back, Shetreet has declared that the whole money-giving framework in the ministry will be reviewed, and that "equal and just" criteria will be established.

Gershon Metzger, the acting director-general whom Shetreet brought into the office, says the majority of

ministry supported institutions need not be concerned by the new criteria. "Most of the budget goes to supporting Torah institutions," says Metzger, an American-born haredi scientist. He puts the number of students in various Torah institutions – from heder yeshivot to kollelim for retirees – at 139,000. These institutions are supported on a per-capita basis, and the allocations are primarily a matter of the institutions effectively updating the ministry's records. Metzger said that some NIS 700,000 of the NIS 1 billion budget goes toward these institutions.

"The problem is not the yeshivot," says United Torah Judaism MK Avraham Ravitz, who adds the yeshivot are not worried their funding will be cut off. "Those allocations are more or less

automatic. The problems are with various amutot [nonprofit organizations]. These organizations are funded primarily by the Torah Culture Department, which has a budget of NIS 64 million. It is in the allocation of these funds that value judgments come into play, says Metzger, and it's here that Shetreet will try to make reforms.

YOSEF LEVENHARTZ, in charge of allocations for the Habad Youth Organization, agrees the ministry's criteria for allocation – unlike those of other ministries – are "too open. The criteria are not well defined," he says, "they are very open to manipulation."

Zevulun Orlev, a former director-general of the ministry and now the National Religious Party's secretary-

general, is very willing to provide examples. "Our Bnei Akiva organization has 55,000 members," he says, "but last year was allocated NIS 1.3 million. Shas's youth organization, El Hamayan, has 10,000 members, but received NIS 3.9 million. The reason is because Shas allocated the money not per head, but according to the number of branches. We have 240 branches, and they claimed 1,400, which would mean seven children for each branch."

Shas, for its part, denies any wrongdoing. Orlev says Shas institutions received half the Torah Culture Department's budget, but Shas MK Shlomo Benizri puts the figure at just over NIS 7 million.

"National Religious Party [leaders] are the ones who set up the criteria,"



Shetreet: Instead of big reforms, I plan smaller ones.

Benizri says. "They did it so that their organizations would benefit."

Orlev, who helped draw up the allocation criteria when he was director-general of the ministry, says the criteria don't state whether allocations should be based on the number of participants in programs, or the number of branches an organization has, because this "was clear to everyone." When the NRP was in control of the ministry, Orlev says, 80 percent of the money was allocated to organizations according to the number of participants involved, and 20 percent based on the number of branches. Shas, he says, has turned that situation "upside-down."

ONE FEELING that Ravitz, Orlev, Benizri and Levenhartz all profess to share is the desire to see Shetreet succeed in reforming the ministry. The question that everyone but Shas's Benizri raises, however, is whether Shetreet will have the political courage to go through with the reforms, since a re-vamping of the allocation procedure could antagonize Shas, not necessarily a wise political move for a Labor government minister at the present time.

Shetreet says he realizes the limitations of carrying out major reform in the Religious Affairs Ministry, both because of limited time he has in the ministry – in the best case only some 20 months to the next elections – and because of the political realities. "I do not intend to burn my bridges with any potential coalition party," he says.

Shetreet does not plan to reform the rabbinical courts or the religious councils during this period. "Instead of big reforms, I plan smaller ones," he says. But if Shetreet could put the ministry on the course of proper public management, this would be considered by many a "big reform."

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Ben-Eliezer: Bent on building a greater Jerusalem

The nation's housing czar speaks frankly to Steve Rodan on the need to solidify the foundations of the capital, and of his party

BINYAMIN Ben-Eliezer turned 58 this week with something to celebrate.

Last year was a tough one for the housing minister, referred to as Fuad, a nickname he acquired in his native Iraq. His policy of massive construction in the greater Jerusalem area, including Ma'aleh Adumim, had been under threat from Meretz ministers who objected to any Jewish building in Judea and Samaria. Moreover, for much of last year, he was looking over his shoulder at Shimon Sheves, director-general of the Prime Minister's Office, who heads a committee to speed up construction, was crisscrossing the country, trying to replace Fuad as the nation's housing czar.

Today, Sheves is no longer a danger to Fuad, his powers clipped to the point where he has threatened to quit working for Prime Minister Rabin. The minister's construction policy in greater Jerusalem is largely being implemented. The ministerial committee on approving construction in the territories has met only once and approved much of the housing slated for communities such as Ma'aleh Adumim, Betar and Givat Ze'ev.

As Ben-Eliezer sees it, Jewish housing in greater Jerusalem, in-

cluding the Etzion Bloc, signals to the Palestinians the intentions of the Rabin government regarding the future of the area. "I [strongly believe] that you can't evacuate Gush Etzion a third time," he said in an interview, referring to Jewish settlement during talmudic times as well as from the early 20th century until the War of Independence.

"I am glad that my concept has been largely accepted. I don't have to apologize for this construction. I am not one of those who say let's talk now about the issues of the permanent settlement, such as Jerusalem. But it doesn't mean that my hands will be tied until then."

Not surprisingly, Fuad has become a favorite among Jewish settlement leaders around Jerusalem. They point out the battle the minister waged in the cabinet to honor the government's commitment to continue expanding Efrat, after Arab and left-wing protests caused Rabin to stop construction at Givat Hatamar in December.

"He is probably the only minister who is making an effort to continue building in greater Jerusalem," said Shilo Gal, the head of the Gush Etzion Regional Council. "At least in this regard, he has stood



Binyamin 'Fuad' Ben-Eliezer: I believe we should not evacuate Gush Etzion a third time. (Nissim Shorer)

by his commitment." Ben-Eliezer emphasizes that his ministry will build on a massive scale in Jerusalem. The ministry plans to build 30,000 housing units, mostly in eastern Jerusalem, at a pace of up to 6,000 apartments annually. He points out that overcrowding in western Jerusalem is far greater than in the eastern portion of the city, the exception being the Old City.

The housing minister pledges to help Arab residents of Jerusalem as well. "I also plan to allow masses of construction for Arabs," he said. "We have to take care of Arabs as we do Jews. I am willing to work with them on housing, welfare and health in the same way as anybody else, because they are citizens here whether they like it or not."

Ben-Eliezer's recent victories have allowed him to devote more time to the welfare of the Labor Party, whose campaign he headed in 1992.

Ben-Eliezer speaks frankly about electoral strategy in negotiating with Syria and the PLO. The goal, he says, is for an agreement on all fronts by the 1996 Knesset elections.

"We are in a hurry," he said.

in September 1993.

"We thought they'd be on the barricades," Ben-Eliezer said, referring to the belief that the accord would engender massive opposition. "But you know 80 percent of the Israelis, whether they express it or just think it, said, 'Thank God.'"

"This nation is not so interested in Judea, Samaria, Gaza or the Golan Heights," he continued. "The only thing that concerns the Israeli citizen is personal security. He wants to live in peace."

He rejects government efforts to convince Israelis through statistics that they are safer after rather than before the Oslo agreement. It's all a question of how the people feel. During a recent speech in Washington, Ben-Eliezer warned that most Israelis will oppose the peace process unless Palestinian terrorism is halted.

"The PLO accord intensified terror," he said in the interview. "That's how the people feel. You can't take away that feeling with [statistics]."

The current lull in terrorism has Ben-Eliezer breathing easier. What now concerns him is whether Labor will overcome the specter of widespread corruption in the Histadrut and the crisis of confidence in the party leadership.

His fear is that the longer chaos reigns in Labor, the more likely Shimon Peres will challenge Rabin for the party leadership in 1996. It's a scenario that he sees alienating both the party rank-and-file and the electorate.

Ben-Eliezer acknowledges that Labor is in trouble. He portrays Labor as confused, a result of failing "to listen to others sufficiently. This party acted as a party against itself."

But he rejects any instant formulas, such as the entry of Histadrut chief Haim Ramon or former chief of staff Ehud Barak.

The minister says he's in favor of Ramon and Barak being given senior positions, but they have to make up their minds now. He dismisses Ramon's reported conditions for reentry, including guaranteed slots on the list of party candidates for Knesset. "I am against them [Ramon and Barak] choosing the time for their entry and meanwhile [as in Ramon's case] they will keep a political framework in reserve," he said. "I think it would be a big mistake to have Haim Ramon come in at the last moment."

'Financial Times' has trouble with numbers

EYE ON THE MEDIA

DAVID BAR-ILAN

DR. Colin Leci, a Post reader in London, writes: "The Financial Times, distributed worldwide, has a reputation second to none for accuracy in financial reporting. But close scrutiny shows that numerical accuracy does not extend to its reporting of events in Israel."

"On October 20, 1994, the day after the Tel Aviv massacre, the FT published an article on its international news page with an attached box headed, 'The bloody path to peace' which enumerated the number of fatalities attributed to 'Moslem and Jewish militants.' From September 9, 1993 the number of Israeli dead was reported as less than 50 while the actual number was 97."

"I provided the editor with a list of the names, dates and places of the dead and suggested that before publication the number of Israeli fatalities could have been verified by either the paper's Israel correspondent or international news department. The editor's response was 'thanks for the letter, the contents of which have been noted.'"

"On Friday, December 30, 1994, the FT published its Review of the Year 1994. Under

'February' it stated, 'More than 50 Palestinians are massacred by an extremist Jewish settler in Hebron: Peace talks break down.' This is inflation of over 70% of the actual figure of 29."

"This was surpassed in the text under 'October,' where the report was that 'Palestinian Police arrest 200 Hamas members in the search for a kidnapped Israeli soldier, who dies in the rescue attempt. Hamas suicide bomb kills 22.'"

"In February, both the victims (Palestinians) and the perpetrator (Jewish) were identified. But mentioning Jewish victims of Palestinians seems to be bad form: in the October section only the perpetrator is identified, not the victims. To the less knowledgeable, the Hamas suicide bomb could have killed 22 Palestinians."

"Given that the FT staff who compiled the Review had over eight months to check their facts regarding Hebron, including the published Israeli Commission of Inquiry report, it would appear that the facts were deliberately distorted. (Neither the FT nor any other paper ever bothers to point out what the numbers of Israeli victims represent as per-

centage of the total population. Only one or two American papers sometimes mention that the loss of 10 Israelis is, in proportion to the population, equivalent to the loss of 500 Americans.)"

"The paper's puzzling inability to cope with numbers is manifested also in FT maps relating to Israel. On January 27, The Jerusalem Post published a proposed 'separation map,' whose source was Joseph Alpher, former director of the Jaffee Center for Strategic Studies."

"The same map, attributed to the identical source, appeared in the FT six days later. The only difference was that on the FT map the miles/km scale at the map's bottom was five times the correct measurement."

"According to the FT map, for example, the air-distance between Tel Aviv and Jerusalem is a ridiculous 130 miles/210 km., and the narrow waist between the Green Line and the sea a comfortable 45 miles (72 km), not the nine miles Israel always com-

plaints about. The FT editor must have felt he had to expand the country to justify all the attention it was getting from the press."

Dr. Leci's points are well taken, but it must be said that FT's Israel correspondent, Julian O'Connell, who was criticized in an Eye on the Media column (April 29, 1994) for an attack on the Post's "politicized" language, has been filing stories in recent months that are balanced and fair."

Particularly commendable are his precise and articulate business and economic reports, which are devoid of the tendentious and exaggerations that often riddle such articles."

SURVEY IN YELLOW

Television, it is usually claimed, has forced even the most respectable newspapers to turn yellow. They are more sensational, lurid, melodramatic and superficial than ever. The readers' attention span is now shorter than in pre-TV days, their need

for stimuli and color greater, and stress on pictures and illustrations seems obligatory."

The phenomenon is probably universal. But the fierce competition between the two Israeli afternoon papers, *Yedioth Aharonot* and *Ma'ariv*, exacerbates the malaise. Both seem to have abandoned any pretense to responsibility."

Last week, the spokeswoman for Kupat Holim Clalit in the North, Yochi Bauer, issued a press release on Tuesday citing a survey conducted by a Technion medical student, Haviva Walach, under the guidance of Clalit's student clinic director at the Technion, Dr. Eli Haddad."

The survey claimed to have encompassed 100 Technion students, asking them about their health, diet and sex habits. The survey made no attempt to take a representative sample of Technion students. The respondents were chosen by chance, which plainly means that it is not only totally useless but misleading."

Nevertheless, the researcher claimed the profile of the "average student" was as follows: 72 percent male, 86% Jewish, 83% Israeli born and 90% single. In addition to data on smoking, exercise and overweight, the researcher asked whether they preferred a condom as a contraceptive measure. Forty percent said they did; 38% did not report any type of contraceptive."

The spokeswoman wrote in the release that the researcher did not investigate whether they didn't report on contraceptive use because they didn't have sex, or because they were just careless."

The headline on the release says: "The average Technion student doesn't smoke, does little physical exercise, doesn't diet and apparently doesn't have much sex."

On Wednesday, *Ma'ariv* printed the following headline: "38 percent of Technion students don't have sexual relations." This is also the lead of the printed story, by Yonatan Hillel."

On being called by *The Jerusalem Post's* health reporter Judy Siegel to protest the shoddy re-

search and misleading conclusions, Bauer said: a follow-up study using a representative sample would be made. She also disclosed that Hebrew newspaper reporters told her that without the sexy lead, the story wouldn't go into the paper."

REUTER'S RETRACTION

On February 10 this column was devoted to the vendetta *The New York Times* seems to be having against Rabbi Avi Weiss. The column also pointed out an inaccuracy in a Reuters dispatch describing an Auschwitz incident in which Weiss was involved. The following, released by Reuters as an advisory last week, is self-explanatory:

AUSCHWITZ-PROTEST-ADVISORY. Reuters erroneously reported in a story from Oswiecim, Poland, on January 27, that activist New York rabbi Avi Weiss and his followers had traded blows with two Poles near the Auschwitz Nazi death camp.

"Scuffling did occur in the incident but Reuters now accepts that neither Weiss nor his followers hit anyone. The story is therefore withdrawn and no substitute will be issued."

The color of victory

A VIEW FROM NOV

MOSHE KOHN

ON PURIM, as during Hanukkah, we say the *Al Hanissim* prayer thanking God for "the miracles" He "did for our ancestors..."

However, the Scroll of Esther, which tells the Purim story, and the reading of which is one of the central observances of the holiday, says nothing of any supernatural miracle.

But a Purim wonder there is. When Esther tells Mordechai, "Assemble all the Jews..." as a first step toward thwarting Haman's design to exterminate the Jews of Ahasuerus's empire, he summons them, they come, and then act, as one (Esther 4:15-17 and 8:10-9:27).

Jews acting in concert under a united leadership - is that not the miracle of miracles?

THE ONLY physical trait the scroll ascribes to its eponymous heroine is that she was "beautiful and good-looking" (2:7).

The Talmudic Sage, *Yehoshua ben Korha*, Esther was *yevakroket*, "greenish," but a strand of *hesed* (grace) lent her beauty.

According to the Talmudic Sage Rabbi Yehoshua ben Korha, Esther was *yevakroket*, "greenish," but a strand of *hesed* (grace) lent her beauty.

The commentator Rashi translates *yevakroket*, based on *y-r-k*, the root for "green," as pale green like the myrtle leaf.

The Jewish Publication Society's translates the male form, *yevakroket*, in Psalms 68:14, as "the color off fine gold."

The Zohar says Esther's complexion was greenish yellow like an etrog.

The Gaon of Vilna said anxiety over being virtuous on the royal "beauty contest" caused her to turn greenish.

(See Megilla 13a with Rashi's commentary and Rabbi Adin Steinsaltz's glosses; *Yehoshua Bachrach's* *Kivuni Ladorot*, and *Yishai Hasida's* *Ishi Hatanach*.)

Rabbi James Gordon of Jerusalem noted Esther's green "tint" recently in the name of his brother and fellow Jerusalemite, Rabbi Macy Gordon.

He did so as chairman of a meeting, introducing the speaker, Ruth Matar, founder and co-chairman of the Women for Israel's Tomorrow group, known as the Women in Green because of

the green hat and/or green bow they wear.

GREEN IS the color of the shamrock, the Irish national flower.

It is also the color of Patrick, Ireland's patron saint. He is said to have planted that trefoil flower in Ireland to illustrate the Holy Trinity. His day is today, March 17, also known in Erin as Green Ribbon Day.

It is the color, too, of the Irish struggle for freedom, the color of which they sang about how the British were "hangin' men and women there [in Erin] for the wearin' o' the Green."

The Women for Israel's Tomorrow's choice of green as its trademark has no connection with the color's Irish history, though our police sometimes treat our Women in Green virtually as if they were the British Army crushing the Easter 1916 armed Irish rebellion.

Our women's green symbolizes their protest against the division of Eretz Yisrael into two countries, one Jewish, one Arab, separated by the "Green Line."

Between 1948 and 1967 that line truly was the border between two worlds: the world of Israel, where we struggled to restore vibrant human, animal and plant life, and the world of the Jordanian-occupied area of Eretz Yisrael, the historical territories of Judea, Samaria, Benjamin etc., the "West Bank."

The "Green Line" was the line of verdure on our side of the 1949 armistice lines. On the other side was the brown barrenness of the Jordanian-occupied areas.

Today our statesmen would turn that line into an official border permanently separating us from the cradle-lands of our four-millennium history here.

They no longer even call it the Green Line, but "the seam line." It is proposed that the line be protected against Arab incursions by our soldiers aligned "inside Israel proper," west of the Green Line.

The protest of the Women in Green is against this return of Israel to what Jewish leftists call

its "natural size," our return to what even arch-dove Abba Eban called our "Auschwitz borders," to the Israel of the 1948-1967 armistice lines, to what those women call "the Green Line ghetto."

RUTH MATAR and her co-chairman and daughter-in-law, Nadia, vigorously reject the stereotype that has been painted of the group as comprising violent, Orthodox, old women recently arrived from the US.

Contrary to that stereotype, promoted by the generally hostile news media and the Rabin/Peres/Shahal propagandists, the women - and men - who belong to and materially support Women for Israel's Tomorrow, or participate in the group's demonstrations, include the young, the non-Orthodox, people of a (moderate) leftist orientation, veteran Israelis from various lands, and sabras.

All the group's activists are volunteers, and when, for example, they charter a bus to transport them to the site of a scheduled demonstration, all the participants pay their own way.

In staging a demonstration, the Matars are careful to obtain a permit if they expect 50 or more demonstrators. (Public assembly of up to 49 persons doesn't require a permit.)

They allege, and they claim to have video-film evidence supporting the allegation, that the altercations between them and the police that resulted in violence and/or the arrest of demonstrators were initiated by the police.

In one such altercation, Nadia suffered several broken ribs and Ruth a brain concussion. The matter is before the courts in countersuits filed by the police and the Matars.

A WOMAN wearing her "official" green hat took a taxi to a scheduled demonstration at the Jerusalem-Bethlehem IDF checkpoint. When they arrived and she asked the driver what her bill was, the driver said: "Because of the hat you're wearing, the ride is free." (The woman paid anyway.)

IN KABBALISTIC chromatics green is the color of victory. Amen!

SRULIK



Purim is a time for laughter and fear

SHABBAT SHALOM

SHLOMO RISKIN

IS Purim a happy day or a sad day? On the surface, the question seems absurdly out of place; Purim appears to be the most joyous day on the Jewish calendar. We are Divinely mandated to eat and drink, even to the extent that a person can no longer distinguish between praising Mordechai and cursing Haman.

In carnival fashion, everyone wears costumes, and Rav Moshe Isserles, author of the Ashkenazi version of the *Shulchan Arukh* Code of Jewish Law, even allows men to dress up as women and vice versa. Purim is the one day of the year in which we seem to suspend our general comportment of "passionate sobriety," so why even suggest a plaintive note?

And yet... extreme expressions of what seems to be joy - as in the case of drunkenness - are actually a cover-up for deep depression; loud music may be a means of drowning out a difficult-to-face personal truth.

When we look beneath the surface, we discover that the Sages of the Talmud expressed two very different approaches to the festival.

In discussing the origin of our custom of reading the Megilla both on Purim evening and in the morning, the Talmud first records R. Yehoshua ben Levi's source: "O my God, I cry in the daytime, but You hear not, and in the night season, and I have no rest" (Psalms 122:3). Several lines

later, R. Helbo in the name of R. Ula Birah quotes - a different verse: "To the end that my glory sings praise to You, and not be silent. O Lord my God, I will give thanks to You forever" (Psalms 30:13).

The first Sage is rooting the Megilla in a plaintive cry; the second substitutes glorious praise.

The first Sage zeroes in on the negative. The very name of the festival, Purim, means "lots," as in lottery, with Haman's lottery itself the symbol of a life in which fate is blind. We are all victims of some terrible lottery, living rather Kafkaesque lives. Anything can happen, and usually does. This is especially true regarding Purim, which transpires in the Diaspora. Remember the Talmudic warning: "Those who live outside of Israel are likened to individuals who have no God" (B.T. *Ketubot* 111).

In the Diaspora, under the open gentle sky, we're exposed to every wind and whim. Indeed, the very term *galut* (exile) literally means to be open and exposed (*galui*). And so when the Sages considered why we do not say Hallel (Psalms of Praise) as we do on every other Festival, they answer because "we are still slaves to Ahasuerus." Despite the miracle, a Gentile society which would destroy its Jews in an in-

stant remains Persian reality: Ahasuerus the king must be constantly placated, and there is no guarantee that a beautiful Esther will appear at the right place and at the right time. This is why the Scroll of Esther is called an *iggeret*, a letter, and not a book; a letter expresses transience rather than permanence, a message to be discarded and not preserved.

From this perspective, the celebratory aspects of Purim assume a different significance. Costumes and masks characterize a world wherein things are not what they seem, a topsy-turvy existence in which everything changes. To take joy in the moment in an atmosphere of such uncertainty requires the external stimulus of wine and whiskey.

Purim is therefore the ironic and bitter expression of a fleeting and insecure survival; you can never be sure of anything, if you're Jewish in a Gentile country.

But lest we despair too quickly, there is also another way to experience Purim, and this is why the Talmud quotes the second verse, which speaks of glorious praise and eternal thanksgiving. R. Helbo suggests that we must view the events of Purim from a different vantage point, one that can provide hope for and confidence in the future.

We may well be vulnerable, especially in the Diaspora, but we are not alone; God only appears to be hiding. As long as we behave heroically with the requisite commitment (*mesirat nefesh*), we will always emerge victorious.

Thus the true heroine of Purim is Queen Esther. She could have denied her Jewishness and maintained herself as respected Queen of Persia. But since her people were under threat of execution, she risked her life to approach the king. Her ultimate commitment to her nation is the true message of Purim: a single person can make a difference. Everything is not haphazard and inexplicable. Proper action at the proper time can and will result in redemption.

The importance of human action can also be seen from the fact that the tale does not end with the hanging of Haman. The last chapter describes how the Jews took up arms to fight and slay those Persians who would have killed them. This too required *mesirat nefesh*. As a result of our commitment and the Divine intervention which followed, our community was saved. This gives us the right to truly rejoice on Purim.

According to Maimonides in his Laws of the Megilla (2:18), Purim will be here even when all other festivals are gone, and Megillat Esther will be ranked with the Five Books of Moses and the Oral Law.

Shabbat Shalom and Hag Sameach

Special occasion? Share it with the funds

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NIS 500 Anon., Tel Aviv.
NIS 360 in loving memory of my wife, Ofra - Egon Tauber, Tel Aviv.
NIS 315 in honor of Dustin Koffler, Toronto, on the occasion of his bar mitzva - H. Simon, Herzliya Pituah.
NIS 225 in memory of David Benjamin - sadly missed by his Haila friends.
NIS 180 in memory of my mother, Sadie Levy - Naomi Alper, Moscow Shorashim.
NIS 102 in honor of the 102nd birthday of Dr. Lotte Aronheim - With love from her grandchildren and great-grandchildren.
NIS 100 S. and D. Shollman, Fla. In loving memory of our beloved Monty - D.R.S.
NIS 85 in memory of my dear friend, Golda Kozlovsky - Sylvia Ark, Fla.
NIS 60 Maureen Norton Kilbourn, Kibbutz Ma'agan Michael.
NIS 118 in loving memory of my father, Alfred Sobol - Marion Segal Freed, Los Angeles, CA.
NIS 100 in memory of my beloved wife, Dorothy - Abraham Rubin, Stamford, NY. In loving memory of Gily E. Bard, who died February 22, 1995 - The Bergers, Berkeley, CA.
NIS 100 in memory of my mother, Mrs. Sandra Bernman, Plainfield, NJ.
NIS 50 out of love for the Jewish People - Fedora and Max Resnik, Buenos Aires, Argentina.
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NIS 72 in memory of my dear aunt and uncle, Elaine and Abe Rabitz - Chana Falk, Ma'sleh Adumim.
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Happy Purim

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Tuk-tuks and elephants: Tripping through Thailand

Palm-studded sandy beaches, deserted islands and richly spiced cuisine ensure that it's not just sweet smiles from the locals that make visitors feel like honored guests in Thailand, Sue Fishkoff writes

THE three-wheeled tuk-tuk - Thailand's kerosene-powered answer to the skateboard - careened wildly down the crooked streets of Chiang Mai, weaving deftly in and out of bicycles, mopeds and assorted largeships on its way to the bustling Night Market, the mecca of foreign bargain hunters.

Chiang Mai, Thailand's second largest city, 640 km. north of Bangkok, provides a charming, verdant respite from the country's sweltering, raucous, traffic-snarled capital. It's well worth the one-hour plane ride.

Founded in the late 13th century, Chiang Mai has slowly expanded outside the confines of its ancient walled city and surrounding moat, but has preserved its small-town serenity.

More than a dozen Buddhist temples lie within a half-hour stroll of each other, separated by street markets, outdoor cafes, travel agencies and handicraft shops.

The pace is gentle, as are the people. In Thailand, it's considered unforgivably rude to display anger, and the constant smiles and sweet manners of the local populace make visitors feel like honored guests.

The Amari Kincome hotel, five minutes west of the walled city by tuk-tuk, provides a lovely, if somewhat pricey, base from which to explore the area.

The only place you'll find a crowd in Chiang Mai is after sunset at the Night Market, where more than 100 merchants cram their goods into four square blocks of stalls haphazardly arranged around an indoor mall area.

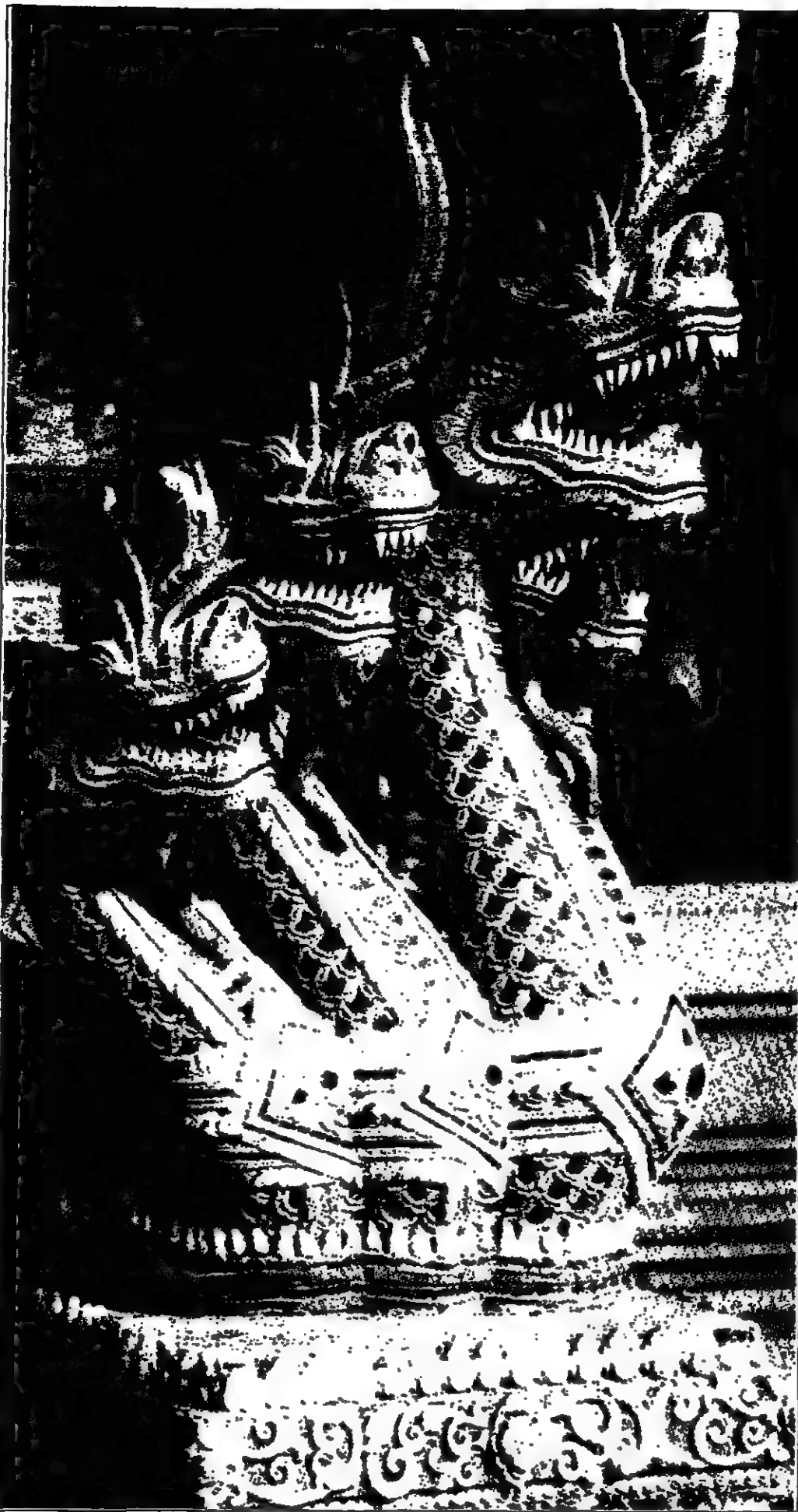
The Night Market is noisy, neon-lit and overflowing with bargains. Cotton and rayon trousers at 100 baht (approximately NIS 12), pairs are jammed next to NIS 24 Thai silk shirts in stunning colors.

Bags of saffron, star anise and coriander seeds spill over onto stacks of leather handbags and ersatz designer watches, whose logos hang with a flick of the merchant's wrist.

Bedraggled women from the northern hill tribe villages clutch their babies in one arm while proffering gorgeous handwoven rattan baskets or embroidered jackets, vying for attention with young punks in Levi's selling tie-dyed skirts and T-shirts straight out of 1980s Ashbury.

The bargaining is carried on in all languages, with French, German and English the clear favorites.

Tourism replaced rice export more than a decade ago as Thailand's No. 1 industry. More than 6.5 million foreign visitors in 1994 pumped \$5 billion into the country's coffers, and the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT), which sponsored this reporter's recent trip, is relesly promoting tourism for 1996, marking the 50th anniversary of the reign of His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej (Rama IX).



Multiple serpent heads, inlaid with colorful mirrored glass, are traditional decorations at the entrance to Thai temples; this one is in Chiang Mai. (Sue Fishkoff)

Direct flights to Bangkok from Tel Aviv on El Al, which began last December, helped double Israeli tourism last year to nearly 40,000 visitors. As of February 7, Israelis may visit Thailand for up to 30 days without arranging a visa in advance. Festivities for the king's anniversary year begin October 24, 1995, when a total solar eclipse

will be visible in Thailand for three hours. Major hotels along the eclipse path have been sold out to Japanese tour groups since 1992, according to *The Bangkok Post*, and the TAT, with no sense of irony, asked sunflower farmers in the north to plant a month early this year so the flowers will be in full bloom by October.

CHIANG MAI is a center for booking two- to seven-day treks into the northern hill country, particularly the Golden Triangle delta where Burma, Laos and Thailand converge in a lush, remote region whose notoriety as the world's opium poppy-growing center is boldly promoted by tour organizers on every street corner.

In fact, Thai police crackdowns have largely pushed the opium trade across the Mekong River into Burma and Laos, and with the growth in tourism it's nearly impossible to find a "remote" hill tribe village, despite tour operators' claims.

Even six years ago, on my first trip to Thailand, our trek guide limited all rest stops to five minutes, lest we be overtaken on our excursion to this unknown village by the next group of white tourists following hard upon our trail.

Don't miss the chance to ride on an elephant, but watch out for their razor-sharp bristles.

AN HOUR'S flight southwest of Bangkok lies the tropical island of Phuket. More than a dozen palm-studded white beaches line the island's western coastline, where European and East Asian visitors converge to dive, snorkel, dine and enjoy spectacular sunsets over the sparkling blue waters of the Andaman Sea.

Ten years ago, most of Phuket was blanketed with fishing villages and rubber plantations. Today, it's become the most actively traded land in Thailand, as shrimp farmers sell off their coastal property to the international hotel chains that are swiftly darkening the once-pristine beaches.

"Yes, we got rid of many, many rice fields here," explained one smiling TAT tour guide as our group entered Patong Beach, a two-kilometer stretch of coastline whose honky-tonk attractions rival those of old Miami Beach.

For the tourist who craves Mai Tais, hamburgers and crowds of other white tourists at the end of a long day in the sun, Patong is the place.

But a 10-minute drive north or south brings you to other quiet beaches where the waves are soft and the pineapples plentiful. Licensed, modestly dressed women in straw hats will massage your back and limbs right there on the sand, for the paltry sum of NIS 20 an hour.

Phuket's main drawing card, however, is its proximity to hundreds of wildly beautiful islands, many of them deserted, with breathtaking views under and above the water. Phang Nga Bay, a two-hour trip by small boat from Phuket's northeastern coast, is studded with huge limestone cliffs rising straight out of the water, a haunting backdrop to a day's outing.

Many of these rocks contain hidden caves, which can easily be explored in rubber canoes with expert guides. Outfits such as Sea Canoes take visitors on hour-long trips through mysterious caverns, with mangrove swamps and wild monkeys, and can be booked through any hotel concierge.

A HIGHLIGHT of any trip to Thailand is, certainly, the richly spiced Thai cuisine, bursting with fresh tropical fruits and vegetables, and redolent with the exotic scents of lemongrass, lime juice, fiery red peppers and "nam pla" (fish sauce).

A full dinner - without alcohol - rarely exceeds NIS 20 per person, although beer and wine are sold at North Tel Aviv prices. Vegetarian and fish dishes are plentiful, although kosher diners should ask whether dried shrimp, shrimp paste or ground pork is used as flavoring.

While in Thailand, dress modestly, avoid insulting the king or Buddha, always bargain, and keep smiling. Sawadee!

The right rub

LANSI, a deceptively fragile-looking young Thai woman employed by the Nirvana cafe and guest house on Khao San Road in Bangkok, smiled gently as she placed my crossed arms behind my head, pulled back sharply, and dug her pointed little knees into the small of my back. She's trying to rip me limb from limb, I thought dully, as, far away, my spine gave out an alarming crack. And I'm paying her to do it.

They call it Thai traditional massage, and it is to medicine in that Far Eastern kingdom what acupuncture is to the Chinese and surgery is to Western physicians. Traditionally practiced only by Buddhist monks, who have trained for years in temple schools, Thai massage has been degraded since the Vietnam War turned Bangkok into a major R&R stopoff for American GIs, stimulating the proliferation of urban strip joints offering "body massages" that are nothing more than thinly-disguised prostitution centers.

But traditional Thai massage has made a comeback in the '90s, encouraged by public committees and rising tourist interest in this ancient physical art.

Massage was developed as a healthcare technique at least 5,000 years ago in China, and probably came to Thailand along with Buddhism, taught by yogis who used various body postures and stretches to relieve physical tensions after long periods of meditation. Even today, Thai villagers come to temples for restorative massages, which some monks supplement with prayers and written charms.

The center of traditional massage in Thailand is Wat Po, Bangkok's oldest Buddhist temple and headquarters of the Wat Po Thai Traditional Massage School. Built by King Rama I in the 18th century, Wat Po became the country's first public university, specializing in history, religion, and the medical sciences.

Today, licensed massage teachers at the Wat Po school run two-week introductory courses for Thai and foreign students. Recent graduates practice on visitors, who line up to pay NIS 20 for the privilege.

"Thai massage facilitates relaxation and relieves symptoms by restoring the flow of life energy - prana - through the body," explains Ting, who has been instructing students at Wat Po for 10 years. Illness occurs when that flow is disturbed by blockages in the organs or joints.

To the uninitiated, traditional Thai massage doesn't feel relaxing. Instead of the slow, long stroking motions of the California-style backrub, Thai massage involves a lot of poking, pushing and pulling, with most attention focused on the legs and shoulder blades, rather than the back and neck. If you're not well-stretched at the beginning, you will be by the hour's end.

Any temple or medical facility in Thailand can grant a massage therapy license, which must be displayed around the masseuse's neck or on the wall. Quality varies widely, although basic technique and prices do not.

The women on Patong Beach are licensed and, like other legitimate masseuses, are modestly dressed in loose trousers and long-sleeved shirts. At first, I felt self-conscious lying openly on the sand in my bathing suit, being stroked so intimately in full view of any passerby. But I was soon lulled into oblivion by the warm breeze and rhythmic sound of the nearby waves.

Jilliporn, my 50ish masseuse, lathered my limbs abundantly with coconut and pineapple oils. I felt like a beached pine colada. Her hard, wiry hands pushed and pulled my flesh, while a lit cigarette dangled precariously from her lips. As she bent low over my neck, I envisioned burning ash dropping onto my well-greased flesh, and my entire back bursting into flame. But somehow, it didn't seem to matter. S.F.

Nebi Samwil: Prophet's resting place

IN a land where interreligious and intrareligious conflicts loom with depressing frequency, Nebi Samwil appears to be an island of tranquility. According to tradition, this site northwest of Jerusalem marks the resting place of the prophet Samuel.

To visit it, simply drive out from Jerusalem on the Ramot road, or, if you are coming from Tel Aviv, take the alternate Tel Aviv-Jerusalem highway, via Maccabim, past Givat Ze'ev and Givon Hahadasha. An orange tourist-attraction sign indicates the turnoff to the site.

From the road, you can immediately identify the main existing structure, once a mosque which was closed to Jews, which now includes both a Moslem prayer area and a yeshiva, with no apparent tension at the site. Perhaps even more astounding is that the entire area has recently been the subject of an ambitious archaeological excavation, with no opposition from the haredi public which regularly frequents it.

At 908 meters above sea level, Nebi Samwil commands a view not only of Jerusalem, but of the entire countryside. Although the excavations, conducted by the civil administration's archeology officer, have uncovered remains from both the First and Second Temple period, it was apparently only during the Byzantine era that the spot became identified as the burial place of the prophet.

The major part of the excavations are from the time of the Crusaders, who attached considerable spiritual importance to the site. They are said to have first camped here one evening in 1099. In the morning they found that they could see Jerusalem before them.

Another story relates that in 1192, Richard the Lion-Hearted stood on the spot and wept. Holding his shield before his face, he said that he was unworthy to look at the Holy City, which he was unable to capture.

SEE IT HERE
HAIM SHAPIRO

Medieval travelers, including Benjamin of Tudela, relate that there was a synagogue at the site, and that the scores of Jewish pilgrims who flocked there on special occasions sometimes behaved so badly that the rabbis had to enact special regulations forbidding the drinking of wine there.

In 1730, the Jews were evicted from the site and the mosque was built. During the War of Independence, Nebi Samwil was the scene of a battle in which the Haganah failed to capture the hill. Today, the casual visitor cannot help but be impressed by the extensive excavations, which clearly show the Crusader fortress and give a hint of the Hasmonean remains. However, a doorway with a keystone engraved with what appears to be a Magen David is of Arab, rather than Jewish, origin.

The building, which dominates the crest of the hill, has an imposing central entrance hall in which flocks of birds fly back and forth. Behind a locked wire grille is the Moslem prayer hall, with a cenotaph in the center, surrounded by carpets.

A doorway in the main hall leads to stairs going down to Yeshivat Shmuel Hanavi and a Jewish prayer area, where a similar cenotaph is divided in the middle by a curtain, to separate men and women. Scraps of paper, some

attached to the cover of the cenotaph by cellophane tape, implore the worshippers, or perhaps the prophet, to mention certain names in their prayers. In a niche to the side are several flickering candles.

From the main hall, another flight of stairs, this one steep and uneven, leads to the roof, where you can see all of the city, old and new, spread out before you. These days, it is the modern buildings such as the YMCA, the Holiday Inn, and the apartment houses of French Hill that seem to stand out, but far in the distance, shimmering above the horizon, is the gold Dome of the Rock.

Traveled everywhere? Now try Albania

TRAVEL TIPS
HAIM SHAPIRO

FOR the traveler who has been everywhere, Geographical Tours is offering a 15-day tour of Albania for \$1,595. Other destinations include a 28-day camping tour of Southern Africa for about \$3,000, and tours of Vietnam and Cambodia, and also of Tibet, for about the same price each. All prices include airfare.

FOR THOSE seeking to escape Israel during the Pessah holiday, Jet Line is offering a seven-night package to Rhodes from \$455, leaving on April 15.

Another holiday option is a shopping spree in London. Clal Aviation is offering a six-night

stay at the Cumberland Hotel in Marble Arch for \$653, with departures either before or after the seder. The company also has a Pessah tour to Mallorca, with half board, for \$629.

Nitza Tours is offering a 15-day tour of Turkey for \$764, including half-board, and promises that those taking the tour during April will celebrate the seder in a five-star hotel in Antalya.

THOSE STAYING in the country during Pessah may want to

visit the Ein Gev Festival, from April 18 through 21, which is to include three entertainment stages in a fishermen's village setting, with continuous performances, day and night.

Special activities are planned for children and young people, and a boat ride around the Kinneret will be offered every day, featuring a guide from the Society for the Preservation of Nature in Israel.

WITH THE launching of El Al

flights to Seoul, Natour is offering a series of packages in Far Eastern cities.

One such package includes three nights in Seoul, three in Bangkok, and two in Bali for \$1,897.

VISITORS TO New York can buy a guided bus tour in which passengers can get off at any museum or attraction and then take another bus to the next destination.

The tickets for New York Apple Tours are sold in Israel by Natour.

They have an all-inclusive price of \$25, which can be used over two days.

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Wide-angled lens focuses on the nation

The fifth national census is expected to show far-reaching changes that have taken place here in the last decade, and may reveal some surprising facts, Abraham Rabinovich reports

At sunset on November 4, just as the Sabbath draws to an end, the nation will hold still for a family portrait. Jews, Arabs, new immigrants and veterans will smile into the statistical camera as Israel undertakes the fifth national census since its founding.

The picture that will emerge is expected to show a society that has undergone more far-reaching changes in the past decade than in any period since the early years of the state. The arrival in recent years of more than 500,000 immigrants from the former Soviet Union and the prosperity that has overtaken the country have made Israel a far different place from what it was even at the time of the last census in 1983. If early censuses reflected a spartan society, this one will be asking respondents how many cars they own.

No census taker will knock on doors on November 4, but sunset will mark the census cutoff point. Any baby born after that moment will not be counted. The determination of sunset as a cutoff point rather than midnight as in other countries is a reflection of Jewish tradition, which regards sunset as the end of the day.

The census results will serve as a basis for the nation's economic and physical planning and determine the amount of government subsidies to local authorities which are made on a per-capita basis. The results will also have political import.

"It's going to be very interesting to see how many Israeli Arabs there are," says Prof. Elisha Efrat, a geographer at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. "Does Galilee now have a Jewish majority? I think that, despite what is being said, it doesn't. The census will show us. It will also be interesting to see just how many Arabs there are in eastern Jerusalem."

The Jews say there are 140,000 Arabs and the Arabs say there are 160,000. How many Israelis are living in settlements? The official figures are something like 120,000. The settlers say 140,000. The real figure may be something else altogether.

Although census statistics are periodically updated by partial surveys and projections, their reliability grows weaker with the passage of time from the last census which served as their base. The current census was to have been held two years ago — a decade after the previous one — but was held up because of a court dispute over the tender for printing the census forms and other reasons.

The census will not include the Arab population of the territories, but it will include Jewish settlers there. Noncitizens who have lived in the country for one

year will be included. Foreign diplomats, however, will not be. Nor will Israelis living abroad for more than one year.

The census forms will this time be more politically correct than in the past. For the first time, homosexual couples will be regarded as a single household. For the first time, too, respondents will not be asked their religion, a designation which is anyway available in the Population Registry maintained by the Interior Ministry.

The head of the household will not necessarily be the father this time but the person who fills out the first entry on the family census form. Others in the family will be asked to designate their relationship to that first signatory. For the first time, not only the father will be asked his country of origin, but also the mother.

An army of 7,200 census takers will start distributing forms on October 19 to households; this task should be completed by October 27. On November 5 they begin the collection operation, which will last about three weeks. The census will reach into Beduin tents, as well as into institutions, including hospitals, prisons, mental homes and shelters for battered wives.

The basic form deals with only five questions: name, address, gender, age and country of origin. Twenty percent of the public, selected on a random basis, will be asked to fill out a long form containing 32 questions about income, employment, education, marital status, ownership of certain items (cars, computers, solar heaters, VCRs, and so on) and questions about the type of residence they are living in.

"It is important that the public understand that the information they put on the census form is absolutely confidential," says Daniel Ben-Natan, an ex-Canadian who holds a degree in management and is director of the census. "It is not shared with the Shin Bet, the income-tax authorities, the Interior Ministry or anyone. We are bound by law to total secrecy."

The forms must be filled out in Hebrew or Arabic. There will be explanatory leaflets in some 20 languages, including Russian and English, to help guide new immigrants. If respondents have difficulty with the language, the census takers are to provide assistance when they return to collect the forms.

TECHNOLOGICALLY, the Israeli census of 1995 will be among the most advanced in the world. The information on the questionnaires will not be typed into computers by clerks as in the past. Instead, the filled-in questionnaires themselves will be fed straight into a machine known as



an Optical Data Entry (ODE), which will absorb the information.

"The machine is better than we are at deciphering handwriting," says Ben-Natan. "It will also do away with the percentage of errors involved when someone types the information into the computer. The machine really works. It is the most advanced technology of the day."

If individuals are recorded more than once — for example, a student in a rented room who regards himself as a separate household but who is also recorded by his parents as part of their household — the computers will swiftly note the same identity numbers in the two entries. They are also programmed to flash in-

congruities, like someone who says he was born in 1985 but has a Ph.D. In such cases, checks will be made.

The census takers will be provided with another innovation: computerized maps to guide them on their rounds. The field operation is also thoroughly computerized so that supervisors will be able to check easily that the census takers have completed their routes and that they have not inadvertently entered someone else's route.

It will probably take at least a year before the number crunchers have had their way with the raw data. When they are done, a clear picture will begin to emerge of Israeli society on the eve of the new millennium.

Wild West gunslinger's great-grandson goes east

CLAIM to fame. Country and Western singer Larry Hirsch, appearing at A.A.C.I. Jerusalem's monthly folk music gig, was strumming the introductory bar to a dirty about notorious outlaw Jesse James when emcee and fiddle player Bruce Brill disclosed that Gene James, the gunslinger's great-grandson, was in the audience.

The 51-year-old contemporary James, also known as Itzhak Ben-Avraham, is a retired engineer from Cincinnati. He has been living in Jerusalem since last October, and is working as a volunteer, teaching physics to high schoolers. James's decision to come on aliya was a baptism by fire. He'd originally come here on an extended vacation, but when his house in the US burned down, he decided to stay permanently.

His great-grandmother, Pamela James (née Briscoe), was halachically Jewish. James believes she was also related to Robert Briscoe, the first Jewish member of the Irish Dail (parliament) and the first Jewish Lord Mayor of Dublin.

RULES ARE rules and status has no bearing when regulations require that one has to present one's invitation to gain entry. Thus Supreme Court President Meir Shamgar almost missed the reception hosted at the King David Hotel by British Prime Minister John Major.

Shamgar, who apparently forgot to bring his invitation, did not take kindly to the polite but firm refusal by receptionists to let him in. But the day, or rather the evening, was saved by World WIZO president Raya Jaglom whose own invitation was for two. Since her husband was abroad, Jaglom insisted that Shamgar be admitted in his stead.

US AMBASSADOR-designate Martin Indyk has yet to present his diplomatic credentials, but his Jewish credentials appear to be well in order. A guest at Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin's Sabbath table, Indyk was given the honor of making kiddush, and reportedly acquitted himself well in flawless Hebrew.

NAMED by the prestigious *Forbes* Magazine as the world's most highly paid fashion model, Cindy Crawford, who last year chalked up \$6.5 million in earnings from modeling assignments, may be back in Israel this coming June.

Crawford, who was here in 1992 to model handbags for Capzio, is being courted, along with other catwalk celebrities, including Kate Moss, Elle MacPherson, Yasmeen Ghauri and Christy Turlington, to appear in a June 10 fashion extravaganza at the Roman amphitheater in Caesarea, where at least 25 top international designers, including Karl Lagerfeld, Calvin Klein, Yves Saint Laurent, Pierre Cardin, Ralph Lauren, and Oscar de la Renta, have agreed to Tourism Minister Uzi Baram's request to design garments which best symbolize peace.

Laura Biagotti has announced that she will be attending, as have Romeo Gigli, Herve Leger and Bruce Oldfield. Also participating will be Moroccan designer Tamy Tazi, Jordan's Leila Jiryes and Egypt's Amir Khalil.

Entrance will be by invitation only. Now we'll find out who really is this country's *crème de la crème*.

WELL BEFORE June — next Wednesday in fact — some of the *crème de la crème* will be flocking to the Israel Museum to shake hands with their Serene Highnesses Prince Hans Adam II and Princess Marie of Liechtenstein who will attend the opening of *Princely Taste — Treasures from Grand Ducal Collections*. Many of the objects on display are from the couple's own private collection. Foreign Minister Shimon Peres is expected to put a temporary halt to his overseas peregrinations and to be on hand to greet the bluebloods.

PRIVATELY CONFIDING that he was somewhat embarrassed by the whole affair, Teddy Kollek appeared to be basking in the warmth of former intelligence community colleagues and well-wishers who came to toast the release by the Defense Ministry Publishing House of *That's Teddy*.

The book, compiled by Israel Radio's Ruth Baki, is based on interviews with Kollek's cronies and brings to light previously undisclosed details about Kollek's life. At the reception in the banquet room of the King David Hotel in Jerusalem, Amos Manor, former head of the General Security Service and the Mossad and a friend of Kollek's for 60 years, recalled how a reluctant Kollek had been persuaded to run in the mayoral race for Jerusalem. Bak-

GRAPEVINE
GREER FAY CASHMAN



Meir Shamgar forgot his invitation and almost missed Major's party. (Hir)



World WIZO's Raya Jaglom saved the day by sharing her invitation with Shamgar.



Cindy Crawford is being courted to participate in a fashion show for peace. (P)



Ezer Weizman made capital error in his speech at the International Book Fair.

book fair, unlike most other international conventions, is a permanent fixture in Israel's calendar.

WAS IT poet's license, or simply poor proofreading? The invitation to the Third International Poets' Festival, which opens in Jerusalem tomorrow night, lists Heltt Yeshurun as the "Festival Aditor." Poetry lovers who can't get to the events will be compensated by Israel Radio, which will host five live broadcasts of poetry readings at 5 p.m., Sunday March 19 through Thursday March 23.

Among the visiting poets are Mario Luzi of Italy, Nabaneta Dev Sen of India, Maria Laina of Greece, Abdallah al Udhari of Yemen and Britain, and Marzanna Kiejar of Poland. Poets from Russia, the US, Germany, France, Spain, Scotland, Portugal, Cyprus and the Czech Republic will also participate. Dennis Silk, poetry editor for the literary section of *The Jerusalem Post*, will be reading in English.

PATRONS OF the Tel Aviv opera will tomorrow night be treated to a masked ball at the New York Metropolitan Opera, following a benefit performance by Italian soprano Katia Ricciarelli, Georgian bass Patsa Burchuladze and Israeli tenor Gabi Saleh. Tickets are NIS 350 each and proceeds will be used to foster opera appreciation among youth to ensure growing audiences in the future.

WILL TOO many cooks spoil the broth? "I hope not," says Master Chef Uri Guttmann, who isn't doing too much cooking himself these days. Guttmann, who is chairman of the 27th Congress of the World Association of Cooks Societies (WACS), is too busy preparing menus of a different kind.

In addition to overseeing arrangements for the six-day congress which next March will bring some 500 chefs from over 50 countries to Jerusalem, Guttmann is also responsible for organizing King David's Feast, a mammoth gastronomic orgy which will be held three days after the WACS congress. The multi-course, \$1,000-a-plate dinner for 500 people will be prepared by 12 of the world's greatest chefs assisted by 12 celebrated Israeli chefs.

Proceeds will go to either a scholarship fund for young Israeli chefs or towards a school of culinary arts.

THE RHYTHM was waltz time, but most of the guests preferred the tempo of the roulette wheel — even though the winnings were at most a bottle of wine and a mini box of chocolates. The occasion was the Hand in Hand Viennese Parim Ball at the Tel Aviv Hilton, co-sponsored by the hotel itself, the Austrian Embassy, the City of Vienna, Austrian Airlines and Casinos Austria, which supplied the roulette wheel, the gaming tables and the chips.

Hand in Hand president Sheli Heshen, who raised NIS 170,000 for underprivileged children, would have made much more if casino gambling were legal and if her organization could have skimmed a small percentage of revenues from cash wagers. Music for the event was provided by the Vienna Opera Ball Orchestra conducted by Uwe Theimer.

Austrian ambassador Herbert Kroll, keen to encourage the Tel Avivians to do things the Viennese way, declared "Politics divide, but music unites."

The invitation to the ball had stipulated formal attire. Female guests responded positively and several came in splendid long gowns. Black was the prevalent color, though Vienna's most celebrated expatriate, Jerusalem councilwoman Yehudit Hubner, chose strawberry red. Several of the men wore black bow ties and tuxedos, but Tel Aviv Mayor Ronni Milo came in his usual working gear. Apologizing for wearing jeans and a sports jacket, Milo said that he nonetheless felt "at home."

YOU DON'T have to be a politician to get a phone call from US Senator Patrick Moynihan. It's enough to be an expert on child placement. It was in this area that Moynihan consulted Dr. Adia Weiner, a teacher at Haifa University's School of Social Work. Weiner and her husband Dr. Eugene Weiner have co-authored a book, *Expanding the Options of Child Placement*.

Weiner also chairs the Council for the Child in Placement, a volunteer organization that meets children in the environment they live in. The council is launching a nationwide door-knock campaign on Tuesday March 21. Proceeds will be shared with three other organizations — El, Etem and Al-Sam — all of which devote themselves to protecting and caring for distressed youngsters.

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Sit down and be counted

THE shooting had stopped a few weeks before, but the streets of Jerusalem were empty on the afternoon of November 8, 1948, except for census takers making their rounds.

A curfew had been imposed on the entire country in order to ensure that the population would sit still for the taking of the first national census. "In Jerusalem, we were used to curfews," recalls Prof. Uziel Schmeltz, who was in charge of the census in the city.

The War of Independence was not yet over, but the government had taken advantage of a period of truce to carry out the census. It was to be one of the foundation stones of the newborn state. The results would serve as a basis for the population register and for a voters' register for the Knesset.

Even the haredim of Mea She'arim responded to the census takers' questions in 1948, recalls Schmeltz. "Almost all of the haredim cooperated. There was a

sense of emergency." In the subsequent censuses of 1961, 1972 and 1983 many haredim would refuse to cooperate, either because of religious objections to being "counted" or because of refusal to recognize the Zionist state.

The British had begun their Mandate with a census in 1922 and held another in 1931, but war and Arab-Jewish strife prevented another under British auspices.

The 1948 census, in which answers given by the respondents were written down by the census takers, may seem primitive by today's standards, but the results, says Schmeltz, would prove highly reliable. Retired from the Hebrew University where he taught demography, he still recalls the figures for the population of Jerusalem then — 83,000 — and the population of the country, 717,000. In the 45 years since then, that latter figure has grown some eightfold. A.R.

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BUSINESS & FINANCE

FRIDAY, MARCH 17, 1995

15

El Al workers to cooperate in privatization

Post Business Staff

LEADERS of El Al's workers organization yesterday informed Transport Minister Yisrael Kessar that they would cooperate with plans to privatize the airline, as long as workers' rights would not be harmed.

Kessar, who was hosted by El Al yesterday, told the workers to demonstrate the same level of responsibility as they had during the years El Al was in receivership.

El Al's expected profit this year is some \$9 million on revenues of \$1 billion, Kessar told management.

Kessar emphasized that he had instructed El Al's new board of directors to proceed with the pri-



Yisrael Kessar. (Sarit Uzely)

vation process. "If the board decides for any reason to delay privatization of the company, it will not be a problem to replace them, but we hope that won't happen," he said.

He added that he believed in privatizing El Al by selling its shares on the stock exchange, and said he had no doubt that the public would buy El Al shares.

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Court halts sale of Ram pending hearing on appeal

SUPREME Court Justice Gavriel Bach yesterday ordered a halt in the sale of Ram Industries and its subsidiaries to Yehuda Welded Mesh until a hearing can be held on an appeal filed by T.R. International.

In its suit, the Belgian consortium contended that Tel Aviv District Court Judge Yishai Levitt was wrong when he awarded Ram, Ruby Asa's company which has been in receivership since 1992, to Yehuda Welded Mesh. T.R. claimed it had submitted a higher bid.

It argued that as soon as it had been decided that Ram would be sold by public tender, it became incumbent upon the court to accept the highest bid.

T.R. also argued that the lower court erred when it didn't accept the position of Ram's unse-

cured creditors, who favored its sale to T.R. It said the court ignored the interests of the unsecured creditors, who sought the highest possible sale price so they could recoup more of what is owed them.

Yehuda Welded Mesh had originally bid \$36 million for Ram, but raised its offer to \$46m, when T.R. offered \$47m.

T.R. had asked for 10 days to transfer the money, saying it was prepared to pay interest on the additional lapsed time. The court, however, awarded Ram to Yehuda Welded Mesh, because it met the tender's stipulation of three days for payment.

In its appeal, T.R. argued that it is impossible for foreign firms in general, and itself in particular, to meet this stipulation, as such sums of money cannot be transferred from abroad so quickly. (Itm)

Israel Shipyards workers, Treasury, Sko-Car try to resolve differences

Post Business Staff

UNOFFICIAL talks were held yesterday between representatives of the Treasury, workers at Israel Shipyards, and Sko-Car, which submitted the winning bid for the shipyards.

The workers have been barricading themselves on company premises for nine days. Yesterday was the first time they agreed to talk with Sko-Car representatives.

The workers are demanding that the Treasury guarantee to pay increased compensation to workers who were fired after the sale of the company, and to underwrite any shortfall Sko-Car is unable or unwilling to make up.

A source at the talks said that the three parties each sat in separate rooms with occasional communication. There was no report of any outcome.

Motorola to use VocalTec software

RACHEL NEIMAN

MOTOROLA will begin including software made by local start-up VocalTec in some of its modems.

The technology delivers real-time voice communication over Internet.

The company has been selling its software package via Internet, downloading a free demonstration model to users.

The marketing agreement with Motorola will grant users access to the Internet Phone. Coupons in Motorola modem boxes will let buyers download the software, free of charge.

Pensions: The right fix?

COMMENT

NEIL COHEN

HAIM Ramon's demand that the government underwrite the ailing Histadrut pension funds is somewhat disingenuous. The government has already been underwriting the funds for years by issuing the funds with bonds paying guaranteed rates of interest well above the market rate.

The funds currently suffer from an actuarial deficit generally estimated at NIS 30 billion. This means that much more money is being paid out to pensioners than the amount coming in. Eventually, the funds will run out of money.

The deficit in the Histadrut-managed pension funds has arisen because the funds collect too little and pay out too much.

Obviously, it is unfair that pensioners who have contributed for years be left without a pension. Someone is going to have to make up the deficit.

The proposals currently being bandied about would guarantee existing pensioners rights in full. Existing members of the funds who have not yet reached retirement would get a government safety net, but there would likely be a cap on benefits tied to additional pay rises. People who have just joined the workforce will be entitled to lesser rights, most likely in new funds.

This last group will almost certainly have to pay more and work longer for less than the first two groups. Why young workers, with few years of savings accumulated, would simply opt out and join private schemes rather than subsidize current pensioners is clear.

While there is talk of merging all the Histadrut funds it is unclear whether this would stand up to legal challenge.

One also wonders why none of the plans has the Histadrut stumping up more money (it just raised \$250 million from the sale of its shares in Koor) or ceasing to manage the pension funds.

Executive Pay

Richard Giordano would have found it ironic, if not amusing, Giordano, a member of the British business delegation visiting earlier this week, is the chairman of British Gas and has been involved in more than one fuss over executive pay.

As chairman of BOC, the chemicals and gases giant, Giordano was the first man to earn £1 million a year in the UK.

More recently, British Gas has come under heavy criticism for the £475,000 bonus paid to Cedric Brown, the company's chief executive.

British Gas, it should be said, is quite a big company. Its market capitalization is about £12.5 billion, or close to NIS 60 billion, which is about two thirds of the TASE's entire market capitalization.

A couple of executive salaries revealed here this week are worthy of mention.

Electronics Line, the alarm systems company, has reported progressively worse results since going public late in 1992. In 1992 the company earned net profits of NIS 9 million. In 1993 the figure was NIS 6.3m, and in 1994 the company lost NIS 4.3 million.

The company went public at NIS 40 a share, raising NIS 42 million; today it trades at NIS 7 a share. The company pays its joint managing directors - the Krubiner brothers - and their father, who is chairman of the board, NIS 113,000 a month each, a total of a NIS 4 million between the three each year. Evidently, though, the company's board felt that this was inadequate compensation for their part in the steady deterioration in the company's results. It voted each of them a bonus of NIS 105,000.

Haim Rozov, the managing director of textile company Gior Sabrina, received a 3.5% pay rise in 1994 to NIS 744,000, or NIS 62,000 a month. Some \$250,000 a year for running a company with \$75 million in sales is not, in itself, so much.

But in the case of both the Krubiners and Rozov it should be galling for shareholders to see their companies losing money and the value of their investment collapsing while managers are rewarding themselves with ever fatter pay packets which bear absolutely no relation to their performance.

Most companies traded on the TASE are controlled by the people who run them so there is little that public shareholders can do to curb these excesses. Except, of course, for selling their shares in such companies. Which is exactly what they should do.

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WORLD MARKET REPORTS

ABOLITION OF THE FINANCIAL RAND - On September 28 last year, we told you that we strongly recommended that our clients should buy Transnet 75% (T013) in the expectation of a 20%+ gain in 12 months, based on our belief that the rand would be abolished. This was announced on March 16. The exchange rate has moved from SAR4.22 to SAR3.575. If you had taken advantage of this advice, you would have achieved a return of over 30%, including income and currency appreciation, in a little over five months.

As we suggested last week, US dollar stability did not last - the fundamental reasons impeding the dollar remain. The lack of concerted action and policy change, and continued deterioration in the Mexican situation serve to maintain downward pressure.

The US 30-year bond yield has recovered after the likelihood of an interest rate hike to defend the currency was left by the Fed. The yield on the benchmark 30 yr T-bond fell from 7.56% last week to 7.37% yesterday.

The June long UK gilt broke up through 102-00 to a high of 103-12. Resistance around that level may soon be broken to target 104-00. Support lies at 102-24 and 102-16. The yield spread over 10 yr German bunds has fallen from 148 bps last week to 138 bps.

The UK FTSE 100 index held above the 2855 support level, and has also formed some sort of base at 3020. It is currently having difficulty holding above 3050. On fundamentals, UK equities remain attractively rated, and the fall in sterling to under-valued levels increases their appeal to overseas investors. The UK corporate results season has been very encouraging, as we mentioned last week. We have seen buyers of Cookson Group (CKSNL, 204 p), BTR (BTRL, 329p), and Reed International (RIEDL, 752p), which have all reported good figures. Cookson also announced an acquisition and rights' issue.

The Bombay market fell back a little under 2% to close at 3336.29 after the Budget on Wednesday, after having had a good few days. Selling concentrated on stocks adversely affected, such as those in the textiles, cement, and steel sectors. The market is awaiting the report, due on Monday, on the re-introduction of forward trading. The BSE Sensex is still in its 3300-3500 trading range, and any decline associated with the re-deployment of portfolios following the Budget is expected to be limited.

A gold bullion has had a good run, as we forewarned last week, and looks due for a small correction to just above US\$350/oz., before trying to penetrate resistance at US\$355/oz., though US\$355/oz. support may hold.

Sentiment in the South African equity market is generally positive, with the abolition of non-resident share-holder tax as from October 1 thought to be likely to generate increased overseas interest. Otherwise, the muted implications of the Budget are limited. The strength of the rand has dragged prices lower.

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BUSINESS BRIEFS

American Cola, produced for Super-Shuk Greenberg by Canadian soft drink manufacturer Cott, begins undercutting the price of Coca-Cola by 40 percent this week.

Cott makes 250 product-licensed colas for retail chains worldwide. The veteran, 25-year-old company entered the store brand field about five years ago. There are Cott colas in Europe, the Far East, Australia, Europe, and South Africa. Cott's 1994 turnover was \$1.1 billion.

Official receiver Shmuel Tsor will not support Israel Shipyards liquidation, if an arrangement between the Companies Authority and workers is not reached.

The Knesset Privatization Committee met Wednesday to discuss the stalled negotiations between workers and management. It was decided talks should continue, but if an arrangement could not be reached, the general opinion was that Israel Shipyards should be liquidated.

ISRAEL MONEY MARKETS

Patash (foreign currency deposit rates) (15.3.95)		3 MONTHS		6 MONTHS		12 MONTHS	
Currency (deposit for)	Rate	Rate	Rate	Rate	Rate	Rate	Rate
U.S. dollar (\$250,000)	5.375	5.500	5.600	5.700	5.800	5.900	6.000
U.S. dollar (\$100,000)	4.825	4.925	5.025	5.125	5.225	5.325	5.425
Pound sterling (£100,000)	4.650	4.750	4.850	4.950	5.050	5.150	5.250
German mark (DM 200,000)	3.247	3.252	3.257	3.262	3.267	3.272	3.277
Swiss franc (SF 200,000)	1.974	1.979	1.984	1.989	1.994	1.999	2.004
Yen (10 million yen)	0.750	0.755	0.760	0.765	0.770	0.775	0.780

(Rates vary higher or lower than indicated according to deposit)

Shekel Foreign Exchange Rates* (15.3.95)		BANKNOTES		Rep. Rate	
Currency basket	Rate	Rate	Rate	Rate	Rate
U.S. dollar	2.984	2.989	2.994	2.999	3.004
German mark	2.084	2.089	2.094	2.099	2.104
Pound sterling	0.587	0.592	0.597	0.602	0.607
Japanese yen (100)	3.247	3.252	3.257	3.262	3.267
Dutch florin	2.084	2.089	2.094	2.099	2.104
Swiss franc	2.084	2.089	2.094	2.099	2.104
French franc	0.403	0.408	0.413	0.418	0.423
Spanish peseta	0.197	0.202	0.207	0.212	0.217
Italian lira (1000)	1.742	1.747	1.752	1.757	1.762
Belgian franc (10)	2.858	2.863	2.868	2.873	2.878
Austrian schilling (10)	1.742	1.747	1.752	1.757	1.762
Portuguese escudo (200)	20.48	20.53	20.58	20.63	20.68
Irish punt	3.810	3.815	3.820	3.825	3.830
Spanish peseta (100)	2.084	2.089	2.094	2.099	2.104

* These rates vary according to bank. ** Bank of Israel.
SOURCE: BANK LEUMI

NY STOCK MARKETS

New York market indexes

	Last	Change
DJ Industrials	4089.18	+38.75
DJ Transp.	1393.32	+10.85
DJ 30	1393.32	+10.85
NYSE Comp.	3249.49	+25.39
NYSE Transp.	3249.49	+25.39
S&P 500	3249.49	+25.39
S&P 500 Ind.	3249.49	+25.39
AMEX Comp.	408.47	+1.88

NYSE stocks

Unchanged	Advances	Declines
790	1383	775

Other stock market indexes

	Last	Change
FTSE 100	3094.1	+11.1
Hong Kong Hang Seng	847.75	+17.48
Nikkei 225	14,100	+140

Israeli stocks in NY

	Last	Change
NYSE / AMEX	40.89	+0.5
Amel	1.12	+0.02
Amel	1.12	+0.02
Amel	1.12	+0.02

Libor rates

	Last	Change
3 month	6.50	0
6 month	6.50	0
12 month	6.50	0

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INTL. COMMODITIES AND METALS

US commodities

	Last	Change
Cocoa (May)	1247	+17
Cocoa (Jul)	1247	+17
Cocoa (Sep)	1247	+17

London commodities

	Last	Change
Cocoa (May)	1247	+17
Cocoa (Jul)	1247	+17
Cocoa (Sep)	1247	+17

Spot market metals (US)

	Last	Change
Gold	324.34	+1.30
Silver	4.12	+0.02

New York metal futures

	Last	Change
Gold (Apr)	324.34	+1.30
Gold (May)	324.34	+1.30
Gold (Jun)	324.34	+1.30

London metal futures

	Last	Change
Gold (Apr)	324.34	+1.30
Gold (May)	324.34	+1.30
Gold (Jun)	324.34	+1.30

WORLD BRIEFS

Glaxo's Wellcome bid clears final hurdle: Glaxo Plc's \$9 billion (\$14.3b.) bid for rival Wellcome Plc cleared its final hurdle yesterday, passing US anti-trust scrutiny to create the world's largest drugs company.

With annual sales of \$8b. (\$12.7b.) and a 5.3 percent market share, the new Glaxo Wellcome leaps ahead of long-standing leader Merck & Co. of the United States, which has a 4.4 percent market share.

Both Glaxo and Wellcome have major presence in the United States, with dominant positions in some drug sectors, and thus needed to satisfy US competition guidelines.

BMW 1994 net profit jumps by a third: German luxury car maker Bayerische Motoren Werke AG said yesterday its net profit leapt 35 percent to 697 million marks (\$504.9m.) in 1994.

BMW had made a net profit of 516m. marks (\$373.8m.) in 1993, making it the only German car maker to remain in the black in that year.

The company said in a statement that Britain's Rover Group, which it bought last year from British Aerospace Plc, contributed 12m. marks (\$8.69m.) in profits.

Rover had made an operating profit of \$56m. (\$89.64m.) in 1993 before interest charges of \$65m. (\$104m.). It had made operating losses of around \$50m. (\$80.04m.) in 1991 and 1992.

Metals group Hoogovens swings back to profit: Dutch metals group Hoogovens NV said yesterday it swung firmly back to profit in 1994 as a result of higher sales volumes, higher selling prices and a further reduction in its costs.

The steel and aluminium producer reported a 1994 net profit of 354 million guilders (\$228m.), compared with a 1993 loss of 234m. (\$151m.). Turnover rose 10 percent to 7.93 billion guilders (\$5.12b.).

Hoogovens also announced a two guilder dividend (\$1.29), its first payout to shareholders after three years of heavy losses.

Daimler, ABB to form global rail link: German industrial giant Daimler-Benz AG and Swiss-Swedish engineering group ABB Asea Brown Boveri AG said yesterday they would merge their rail activities into a powerful global venture.

The 50/50 joint venture, known as ABB Daimler-Benz Transportation, will be based in Berlin.

"In view of the difference of size and profitability between the two partners, Daimler-Benz will compensate ABB with \$900 million," the companies said in a joint statement.

Daimler's rail business is a division of its ABB subsidiary which has been making losses for some years. ABB's transport business, consisting of around 50 companies worldwide, made \$140m. profit last year.

The two groups said the venture would combine Daimler's strength in transport systems and mechanical engineering with ABB's experience in electrical engineering. It would be a leader in the global rail transport market.

Russian Lukoil aims for slice of world's capital: Lukoil, Russia's biggest oil producer, is turning to the world's capital markets to broaden its investor base and hopes to raise close to \$500 million in 1995, a top company official said.

"We need capital. We haven't received a kopec from the state in 1995. We need to go to the world markets," Lukoil Vice-President Leonid Fedun told Reuters in an interview.

The conglomerate was established as a shareholding company in April 1993.

It plans to issue \$300m. worth of convertible bonds in May, with a one-year maturity, to pay off its state debt. Fedun said the bonds could be backed by up to 10 percent of Lukoil's shares - part of the 45 percent to be held by the state until next year.

German rate news hits dollar

LONDON (Reuters) - Germany's decision to leave interest rates unchanged unleashed a fresh rally in the mark yesterday, crushing the dollar by one pence and sending Britain's pound crashing to a record low.

But news that Italian Prime Minister Lamberto Dini had scrapped through a crucial confidence vote held out a glimmer of hope for the US currency and straggling European counterparts.

The dollar tumbled below 1.38 marks in the wake of the Bundesbank news and softened slightly

against Japan's currency to remain firmly below 90 yen.

Steady slumped to a new record low of 2.2082 marks in Europe as the German currency surged on the German rate news.

Some analysts had forecast the US currency would gain in the wake of a vote promising to save Italy from early elections, thus soothing the unhappy lira and checking the mark's rise.

But the weakening currency failed to break through resistance at 1.200 marks after news of the vote, after striking a record low of 1.228 marks in early morning

trading. Earlier, prospects of a German interest rate cut - sparked by comments published yesterday by Bundesbank chief Hans Tietmeyer - had given the humble dollar a brief boost.

But German central bank announced it was keeping all of its key interest rates unchanged after a regular meeting of its policy-making council.

Tietmeyer had said in an interview with Britain's *Guardian* newspaper that the stampede into the mark - a favorite of investors

in times of currency turmoil - may give a little room for reducing interest rates, which would limit the German currency's enduring appeal.

Fading hopes for higher US interest rates and renewed concern that an unhappy Mexican economy would impair the United States also served to depress the dollar. Mexico's hefty devaluation of its peso last December has continued to blight US markets.

European bourses gave a scant reaction to the Bundesbank's decision, and remained prey to the oscillations of the dollar.

Air France cuts losses, reopens fleet talks

PARIS (Reuters) - Air France said yesterday it had more than halved its losses in 1994 and was in talks with Boeing and Airbus about restructuring its fleet at the lowest possible price.

Chairman Christian Blanc told reporters the state-owned airline had slashed its loss to 2.7 billion francs (\$487.7 million) for 1994 from 8.5b. (\$1.7b.) in 1993.

He said the company, which is changing its fiscal year to end-March, expects a loss of 3.5b. francs (\$711.2m.) for the 15 months to March 1995.

Blanc said the company was in negotiations with Boeing Co. of the United States and the formation European Airbus consortium about restructuring the airline's fleet.

He also said he expected to hear within days whether an alli-

ance between the Belgian government and Swissair on Sabena would go ahead.

Air France hopes to sell its indirect 37.5 percent stake in Belgium's Sabena for its original investment of 1.1b. francs (\$223.5m.), excluding interest.

"I am waiting for things to be clarified in the next few days," Blanc told a news conference.

"If it goes ahead, that's great," he told reporters. He said otherwise Air France would keep its stake but not participate in a Sabena capital increase.

Blanc is spearheading a three-year restructuring program at the airline. The financial restructuring plan, which involves 4,500 job losses over three years and wage freezes, was a prerequisite for European Commission approval of a controversial 20b. franc (\$4.06b.) state cash injection.

US consumer prices up 0.3%

WASHINGTON (Reuters) - US consumer prices advanced moderately in February, the government said yesterday, indicating that inflation remains largely in check.

The Labor Department's Consumer Price Index, as expected, rose 0.3 percent last month, matching January's rise of 0.3 percent. After factoring out volatile food and energy costs, the closely watched core rate of inflation also rose 0.3 percent compared to a January gain of 0.4 percent.

The February core rate also matched economists' expectations. The report showed that food and drink prices were up 0.3 percent in February after falling 0.2 percent in January. But coffee prices dropped 2.3 percent, the biggest decline since a drop of 2.7 percent in September 1989.

Fresh fruit prices rose 3.3 percent, posting their biggest monthly increase since a gain of 3.5 percent in December 1994.

Vegetable prices tumbled 1.4 percent. Lettuce prices fell 31.5 percent, the biggest drop in nine years.

Energy costs fell 0.1 percent last month after increasing 0.3 percent in the previous month. A drop of 0.4 percent in gasoline prices and a decline of 0.3 percent in home fuel oil helped pull down the overall energy index.

Italy's Dini wins budget vote

ROME (Reuters) - Italian Prime Minister Lamberto Dini narrowly won a do-or-die confidence vote and got his emergency budget through the lower house of parliament yesterday despite embittered opposition from his predecessor, Silvio Berlusconi.

Supporters of Dini's two-month-old technocratic government stood and applauded in Italy's red-bellied Chamber of Deputies as Speaker Irene Pivetti announced Dini's victory in the confidence test by 315 votes to 309 with one abstention.

A substantial number of the 38 deputies from the Marxist party Communist Refoundation facilitated a Dini win by voting "Yes" against leadership orders to oppose him.

Dini sought the confidence vote to strip away a rash of deficit-boosting amendments to his 20 trillion lire (\$12 billion) mini-budget. He had warned the amendments would wreck efforts to tackle state finances and plunge Italy into crisis.

Dini, a former central banker and treasury minister under Berlusconi, went on to win a subsequent vote on the budget bill itself by 315 votes to 303. The bill now goes for a final reading to the Senate, where Dini has more certain support.

The second vote was not a confidence issue, but Dini has re-

peatedly said he would resign if he was unable to carry out his four-point policy agenda, which includes the mini-budget.

The lira, beaten down against the mark amid Italy's political turmoil, sank to a record low of 1,228 against the German mark before the start of yesterday's debate and was quoted at around 1,210 after the budget bill was passed.

Media mogul Berlusconi, toppled when the Northern League party quit his government, said his conservative Freedom Alliance was voting "No" to Dini to oppose to what he called a "crime against the credibility of democratic institutions".

Amid cheers and jeers at a stormy session marked by at least one brief scuffle, he said political parties he defeated in a general election a year ago were hiding behind Dini to delay a swift return to the ballot box.

Dini has repeatedly said he will step down once his program is enacted. He believes the last item, reform to the costly pension system, could be passed by the end of April.

Resignation then by his "government of experts", drawn from outside the hung parliament, could clear the way to the election that most commentators believe is likely some time this year.

NYSE rises to new record highs

WALL STREET REPORT

NEW YORK (AP) - Stocks climbed to record highs yesterday for the third time in five sessions, as a weak report on the Philadelphia economy eased fears of higher interest rates.

Stocks were boosted by bonds and the dollar, both of which rallied after the Philadelphia Federal Reserve released a weak economic report.

The Fed said its index of business activity in the mid-Atlantic region dove to 3.3 so far in March, from 11.9 in February. The Fed's area prices-paid index dropped to 41.4 from 46.2, while its employment index plunged to 1.0 from 10.5.

The report led investors to conclude that the national economy is not growing so fast that the Federal Reserve will have to raise

interest rates further in its ongoing campaign against inflation.

The Dow Jones average of 30 industrial stocks rose 30.78 to 4,069.15.

Advancing issues outnumbered decliners by about 7 to 4 on the New York Stock Exchange, with 1,416 up, 800 down and 742 unchanged.

Big Board volume totaled 336.69 million shares as of 4 p.m. (2100 GMT), against 309.51 million in the previous session.

The NYSE's composite index rose 1.77 to 267.92. Standard and Poor's 500-stock index rose 3.52 to 495.40.

The Nasdaq composite index rose 1.50 to 808.88.

At the American Stock Exchange, the market value index rose 1.69 to 456.47.

British shares skyrocket

WORLD MARKET ROUNDUP

LONDON (Reuters) - British shares rocketed to close at the day's peak levels, emboldened by some weaker-than-expected US economic data and an upward bounce in the dollar, and the June long gilt future late in the session, dealers said. The FTSE 100 closed up 47.1 points at 3,094.1 in moderately busy volume.

FRANKFURT - German shares ended floor trade sharply lower, tracking a drop in DAX futures prices as the Bundesbank left key rates unchanged. The DAX index ended 18.08 points or 0.90 percent lower at 1,992.06. In post-bourse trade the index rose 20.93 at 2,016.15.

PARIS - French shares continued recent volatility and closed with a strong gain of 2.71 percent, after Wednesday's drop of 1.72

percent. Traders said equities followed debt markets higher in the afternoon after the latest US data indicated a soft landing for the economy. Paris share prices had fluctuated in the early part of the day, as professionals waited for the US indicators. The CAC-40 index closed up 47.16 at 1,785.76.

TOKYO - Tokyo stocks closed lower on sporadic arbitrage-linked sales. Selling was not very active, but shares remained weak all day in the absence of buyers ahead of March 31 book closings. The Nikkei average ended down 311.15 points or 1.87 percent at 16,355.68.

HONG KONG - Shares closed lower after a day of seesaw trade during which the market digested strong gains made on Wednesday. The Hang Seng Index closed down 17.46 points at 8,347.75.

CURRENCY CROSS-RATES

MARK	STERLING	YEN	SFR	FF
MARK	2.212692	143.28/1	1.8480/7	2.5222/7
STERLING	1.5487/7	0.8728/0	1.2881/11	5.5057/21
YEN	119.88/7	0.6421/1	77.48/4	4.2572/4
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DWELLINGS

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DWELLINGS

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SITS. VAC.

HOUSEHOLD HELP

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SEEKING FILIPINA for housecleaning, live-in, in Herzliya Pituaah. ☎ 09-547965.

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HAIFA, 48 Ahbas st., 3 room apartment, good condition, view. ☎ 04-511771, 04-550046.

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HOUSEHOLD HELP

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REHOVOT, 3-ROOMED FLAT, 208/7 Herzl St., lit, central. ☎ 03-276715.

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SHAPIRAS

(Continued from Page 1)
The liquidators said Shapira, as an MK used his influence inappropriately on the country's economy and trade from 1980-88.

They said Shapira convinced several senior economic and financial officials to grant his requests and give him inappropriate benefits.

In the suit, the liquidators said MK Ariel Sharon, at the time industry and trade minister, encouraged former Israel Foreign Trade Risks Insurance Company manager Emi Kamir to violate regulations and not demand from the Shapiras a personal guarantee for a \$30 million loan.

Sharon yesterday denied the accusations.

The liquidators also accused

the Income Tax Authorities of giving Shapira preferential treatment.

In the suit, they said the officials did not take legal action against Shapira for failing to deduct income tax payments of hundreds of millions of shekels, as required by law.

The liquidators said they have evidence to prove that the Shapiras robbed the conglomerate of its assets in an attempt to increase their wealth at the company's expense.

In the suit, the liquidators referred to suspicions that Shapira illegally registered company holdings at Textile House in Tel Aviv in the name of his wife and used the company to illegally purchase a villa in Caesarea.

TALKS

(Continued from Page 1)
sign" that the US role in the process would become that of an intermediary. The US generally refers to itself as a "facilitator."

The Rabinovich-Mualem meetings will be at an undisclosed location and at unannounced times to preserve their "discretion," the officials said.

Jim adds:

On his return from Germany yesterday, Foreign Minister Shimon Peres told reporters that Israeli-Syrian peace negotiations are back on track, which is in itself progress.

"I think that also on the Syrian matter, attempts should not be stopped to try to find a way to make peace with the Syrians," he said.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Right-wingers arrested at Machpela Cave

Two right-wing activists who have been banned from the Machpela Cave were arrested yesterday by the special police unit at the site. One of the activists, Michael Ben-Horin, was stopped at the entrance by a policeman who spotted his photo in an album of persons banned from the cave. Ben-Horin then tried to enter forcibly and was arrested. The other activist, Michael Ra'anana, then arrived dressed like Baruch Goldstein. He was immediately arrested. A Hebron settler who tried to interfere was also detained.

Ma'asiyahu prisoners accused of rape

The wife of a prisoner at the Ma'asiyahu Prison said she was raped by two prisoners yesterday. The woman, who went to visit her husband, said she was waiting near the jail's entrance when she was approached by the three. She told investigators she was dragged to a secluded spot and raped by two of the prisoners while the third kept watch.

SEPARATION

(Continued from Page 1)
Sources on the committee said that once final approval is given for the project, it will take several months to begin implementation.

Police will be responsible for the separation around Jerusalem, with police manpower substantially increased in and around the city, according to the sources.

Finance Minister Avraham Shohat, Deputy Defense Minister Mordechai Gur, Chief of General Staff Lt.-Gen. Amnon Lipkin-Shahak, Inspector-General Asaf Hefetz and the head of the Prime Minister's Office in Jerusalem.

Urgent! Intern Wanted

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Please call 02-315633 mornings, or leave a message at 02-315632.

BLOCKADE

(Continued from page 2)
Other reports from Lebanon, however, said the navy had only fired warning shots at one boat which had strayed five or six kilometers from the coast into an area patrolled by the gunships.

These reports indicated that the lone incident had been blown out of proportion and noted that other fishermen had taken their boats out afterwards with no untoward consequences.

Meanwhile, heavy fighting continued in various parts of the zone yesterday beginning in the early hours of the morning with long-range shooting attacks on several South Lebanese Army positions.

Hizbullah issued a statement saying Islamic Resistance fighters had fired at SLA posts in the Kaf Huneh region, in the eastern sector of the zone, and around Tunnat Nihar, in the Jezzine enclave.

No casualties were reported among the SLA soldiers, and IDF and SLA gunners returned fire, blasting suspected Hizbullah targets north of the zone.

There were also reports from Lebanon that IAF helicopter gunships had been in action, firing at suspected targets along terrorist infiltration trails in the central and eastern sectors of the zone.

Iran said yesterday it did not care about Clinton's ban on US investment in its oil industry and announced two new oil-related deals with European firms.

"These things will have no effect on our activities," Oil Minister Gholamreza Aghazadeh told Tehran radio. "Basically we do not need them (Americans) at all."

YAD VASHEM

(Continued from Page 1)
The delegation, led by Greek minister Alexandros Tsiaklis, is on a week-long visit to Israel and the Palestinian Authority, which culminates in the ceremony at Yad Vashem this morning.

The Jordanian delegate is Huda Bada of Amman, who heads the student union in her country.

"We attach great

Vatican, Britain boycott Jerusalem 3000

THE Vatican and Britain are refusing to officially participate in the upcoming "Jerusalem 3000," responding to calls by some European leaders to boycott the celebration. Yossi Tal-Gan, director of the event, said yesterday.

Tal-Gan said he was informed of the calls for a boycott by the Foreign

Ministry, and representatives of several European countries who are participating.

The European Council last year came out with a recommendation to member countries not to support the festivities, Tal-Gan said.

Foreign Ministry officials con-

BILL HUTMAN

firmed that embassies in Europe lin told Israel Radio. Jerusalem Mayor Ehud Olmert said the opposition is "misguided." "We recognize that most of the world does not recognize Israeli rule

have encountered opposition to the festivities, marking 3000 years since Jerusalem became King David's capital.

"I regret very much that we have run into cool reactions from several elements in Europe, from the Vatican, and even in the United States," Deputy Foreign Minister Yossi Bei-

in Jerusalem, but this is not the issue," he said.

"We are talking about a celebration of a historic fact, not about making any kind of political statement," Tal-Gan said.

The year-long celebrations are scheduled to begin in September.

Furor over nursery-school book accepting gay life-style

A PROPOSED handbook for nursery-school teachers, which legitimizes homosexual and lesbian family life-styles, has come under fire from a former education minister.

MK Zevulun Hammer (NRP) said yesterday that a draft version of the handbook, which had reached him, contained examples of life-styles that were totally unacceptable to the vast majority of the population.

"The [proposed] handbook describes fam-

ilies where there are two 'married' men or two 'married' women and this is neither normal nor legitimate," Hammer said in an interview on Israel Radio.

Education Minister Amnon Rubinstein, who said he heard of the draft only following the radio interview, will look into the matter himself.

BATSHEVA TSUR

"The minister and the director-general do not normally approve the drafts of such handbooks personally, but under the circumstances they have requested that it be sent to them for review. No such text has been approved," a ministry spokesperson said yesterday. She said the text had been written by one of the teams which normally deals with such subjects.

The text is meant to advise nursery-school teachers how to explain different types of families to the youngsters, particularly in view of the rise in the number of single-parent families. "The intention [of including the non-heterosexual parents] was to explain to the teachers how to deal with those rare cases where children in their nursery school have a lesbian or homosexual parent," the spokesperson said.



Transport Minister Yisrael Kessar queries a truck driver yesterday as part of an operation with the police to halt overloading. Kessar said that of the 150 trucks stopped, 62 were carrying at least 25 percent more than permitted by law. Several trucks were even carrying 30% or more than permitted. Their drivers lost their licenses for 30 days. Starting on Sunday, trucks leaving the various seaports will be examined.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Egyptian sentry fires at Israeli envoy's car
An Egyptian sentry accidentally shot at the car of an Israeli diplomat in Cairo, but the car was empty and no one was hurt, an Israeli Embassy spokesman said yesterday. The sentry was cleaning his weapon when the incident occurred on Wednesday outside the home of Israeli Embassy minister Jacob Gil in the southern suburb of Maadi, where all Israeli diplomats live.

Gazan sues state over wounding by IDF
Mohammed Alazuni of Gaza filed suit in Haifa District Court yesterday, seeking NIS 1.7 million in damages for injuries he claims he received when shot in the foot by soldiers seven years ago. Alazuni, 28, said he was not participating in disturbances when he was shot, and maintained that the IDF's open-fire regulations at the time were unreasonable and carried out in a negligent manner.

Soldier ignored, later dies of cancer
A soldier, Yehuda Peretz, died Wednesday of cancer only a short time after he was discharged from the army. Peretz, 19, had complained of chest pains, but army doctors ignored his appeals for several months until he was sent for further diagnosis and discharged after cancer was found. Peretz's family said the army was negligent and caused him unnecessary and prolonged suffering. The IDF spokesman said the army is investigating the case.

Rabin denies unity meet with MK Levy
The Prime Minister's Office denied last night that Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin will meet Likud MK David Levy next week to discuss the formation of a national unity government. In other political news, the Labor Party announced yesterday that its annual convention has been postponed until May.

Foreign Ministry delegation to Moscow
Foreign Ministry Deputy Director-General Eyal Ben-Zur left yesterday for Moscow at the head of a delegation that will update Russian Foreign Ministry officials on peace process developments and on Secretary of State Warren Christopher's visit here. Ben-Zur is to meet with Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Viktor Posvalyuk and with the heads of his ministry's Middle East department. The delegation returns Sunday.

Vanunu allowed to meet lawyer
Mordechai Vanunu, sentenced to life in prison for revealing information on Israel's nuclear program, was yesterday allowed to meet in private with his lawyer, Dan Yakir of the Association for Civil Rights in Israel. The meeting was the result of lengthy negotiations with the authorities, who have forbidden such meetings during much of Vanunu's stay in jail. Yakir met with Vanunu to discuss what they could do to get his prison conditions improved.

Kahalani: Anti-troops agitation unhelpful
American Jewish agitation against US troops on the Golan is not a helpful tactic for retaining the Heights, MK Avigdor Kahalani (Labor) said yesterday, just before he returned to Israel after more than a week in the US. "If you convince [the US] not to send American troops, this doesn't mean we will not withdraw," he told a handful of leaders of the Zionist Organization of America. "This is the wrong way to convince people that we are going to stay in the Golan Heights."

Free hikes for Nature Protection Week

LIAT COLLINS

NATURE Protection Week gets underway tomorrow, and the public is being asked to put its best foot forward with free hikes.

The first free walks will take place tomorrow in the Azazin Valley, Nahal Halilim, and other little known sites close to the capital. The trips leave from the Lifta parking lot at the entrance to the city between 9 a.m. and noon. There will also be an SPNI information booth at the International Convention Center parking lot.

On Monday, SPNI is holding its annual gathering for the Arab community, which is expected to be attended by some 14,000 people.

On Wednesday, there is a free day-long seminar on the landscape of the Jerusalem hills at Jerusalem's Van Leer Institute. SPNI is sponsoring the week's activities, together with the Nature Reserves Authority, the National Parks Authority, the Jewish National Fund, and the Education and Environment ministries.

Police crack down on illegal casinos

RAINE MARCUS

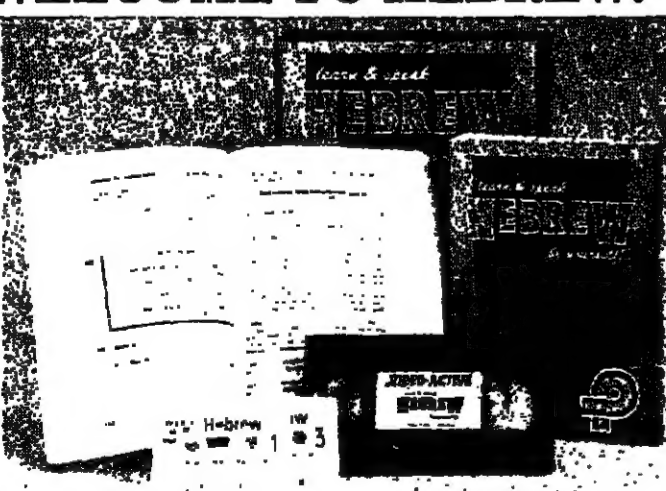
POLICE will crack down on all casinos, although such establishments satisfy "the wishes of the public who enjoy gambling," Police Inspector-General Assaf Hefetz said yesterday.

Tax and customs and VAT authorities may be involved in the crackdown, which will force owners to pay their taxes, a senior police officer said.

Over the past few days, police in the Tel Aviv and Central Districts have raided several illegal casinos, seizing cash and roulette and blackjack equipment. Operators and owners are usually arrested and released on bail.

Scores of casinos, an easy source of tax-free revenue, are opening up in industrial areas, private apartments and restaurants. As long as gambling is illegal, the authorities may not be able to demand income tax or VAT from operators. However, a source said, that they may be able to demand customs duties on imported gaming equipment.

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Penguins unable to conquer Canadiens at home

MONTREAL (AP) — Even when they were winning NHL championships, the Pittsburgh Penguins weren't winning in Montreal.

Wednesday night was no exception. "Sometimes you get streaks like that for no particular reason," said Pittsburgh defenseman Ulf Samuelsson after an 8-5 loss extended the Penguins' winless streak at the Montreal Forum to 10 games. "It's been haunting us for a long time. Montreal just plays better at home."

The Penguins, who beat Montreal 4-2 in Pittsburgh on Monday night, have not won in Montreal since October 29, 1988 (0-8-2). That streak extended through their Stanley Cup-winning seasons of 1990-91 and 1991-92. Mathieu Schneider had two goals and an assist to spark the Canadiens over the Penguins.

Schneider scored in the first and second periods and set up a goal by Mark Recchi as Montreal scored more than five goals for the first time this season.

Patrice Brisebois, Mike Keane, Brian Bellows, Kirk Muller and Valeri Bure also scored for Montreal, whose 9-11-5 record includes a 7-1-3 mark at home this season.

Jaromir Jagr got his 18th and 19th goals for the Penguins (18-7-2), who ended a three-game winning streak. Luc Robitaille, Shawn McEachern and Ron Francis also scored for Pittsburgh.

Flyers 4, Rangers 3
John LeClair's goal with 3:18 left in the third period lifted the visiting Flyers over New York and into a first-place tie with the Rangers in the Atlantic Division. LeClair beat New York's Mike Richter with a slap shot from the left circle for his 14th goal of the season as the Flyers won their fifth straight. The victory increased the Flyers' lead over the Rangers in the Atlantic Division.

EASTERN CONFERENCE

Atlantic Division

	W	L	T	Pts	GF	GA
Philadelphia	13	9	3	29	80	72
N.Y. Rangers	13	11	3	29	77	70
New Jersey	10	11	4	24	88	89
Washington	8	10	8	24	61	61
Florida	10	13	3	23	61	71
N.Y. Islanders	9	13	3	21	62	75
Tampa Bay	9	15	2	20	66	78

Northwest Division

	W	L	T	Pts	GF	GA
Pittsburgh	18	7	2	38	113	82
Quebec	17	5	3	37	95	81
San Jose	12	10	4	28	88	89
Buffalo	10	8	6	26	93	82
Hartford	10	13	3	23	66	72
Montreal	9	12	4	22	73	77
Ottawa	8	16	4	20	50	76

WESTERN CONFERENCE

Central Division

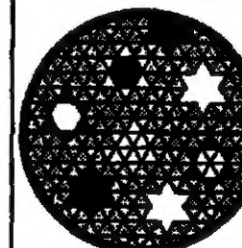
	W	L	T	Pts	GF	GA
Detroit	16	6	2	34	95	82
Chicago	14	8	2	30	82	62
St. Louis	14	8	1	29	87	65
Toronto	12	11	4	28	78	75
Dallas	9	12	4	22	73	69
Winnipeg	9	12	4	22	72	58

Pacific Division

	W	L	T	Pts	GF	GA
Calgary	11	10	5	27	80	70
Vancouver	8	8	8	24	79	80
Edmonton	10	13	2	22	70	88
San Jose	9	12	4	22	71	72
Los Angeles	8	12	4	20	74	94
Anaheim	7	15	2	16	58	88

WEDNESDAY'S RESULTS:

Montreal 5, Pittsburgh 3
Philadelphia 4, N.Y. Rangers 3
Anaheim 5, Calgary 6
Toronto 2, San Jose 1



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ISRAELI CONNECTION

Wright goal sees Arsenal through to Cup Winners Cup semis

AUXERRE, France (AP) — Defending champion Arsenal advanced to the semifinals of the European Cup Winners tournament with a 1-0 victory over Auxerre last night behind a 16th minute goal by Ian Wright.

The teams played to a 1-1 draw two weeks ago in England and Arsenal advanced on a 2-1 aggregate. It was the 24th consecutive unbeaten match for Arsenal in European competition.

Arsenal was paced to its victory by two returns to the starting lineup. Wright scored the only goal in the 16th minute when he rifled a shot from outside the penalty area to the corner of the net. Wright had been dropped from the lineup against Blackburn last week for the first time in the Wright's three-and-a-half year career with Arsenal.

The English striker took advantage of a Auxerre mistake as two French defenders let the ball get past them and Wright pounced on it and punched home a left-footed shot.

Although Auxerre was on the attack most of the time, it could not get by Arsenal goalie David Seaman.

Seaman missed Arsenal's last two games after cracking a rib for the third time in 10 months. Seaman played with the bruised rib before when he was in the nets against Parma of Italy for the Cup Winners final in Copenhagen last May.

Auxerre's best chance came in the 10th minute when Algerian midfielder Monssa Saib hit the crossbar.

Early in the second half Saib also had another clear opportunity but his shot was just wide of

the goal.

Auxerre continued to have good chances in the second half but Seaman was always in the right position to make the save.

In Spain, Miguel Pardeza and Santiago Aragon scored second-half goals to give Zaragoza a 2-0 win over Dutch side Feyenoord, advancing the Spaniards on 2-1 aggregate in their Cup Winners Cup second-leg quarterfinal.

Pardeza made it 1-0 in the 59th minute, scoring from 13 meters on a quick shot with his left foot — not his usual shooting foot — that beat Feyenoord goalie Ed de Goey low and to his left.

Aragon scored the decisive goal to put his team in the semifinals in the 71st minute, striking a lobbing pass waist-high from 18 meters. The shot surprised de Goey, beating him to his right.

The Spaniards, needing to score, carried the play in the first half against a physically strong Dutch side content to play rugged defense after winning the first-leg match in Rotterdam 1-0.

Zaragoza had two clear scoring chances in the first half. In the 30th minute, Juan Eduardo Esneider shot wide from 18 meters after pulling de Goey out of position.

In first-half injury time, Aragon rifled a free kick from 25 meters that de Goey managed to stop with a lunging save.

Wednesday's late European Cup results:

In Lisbon: Benfica (Portugal) 0, AC Milan (Italy) 0. Attendance: 85,000. Milan wins 2-0 on aggregate.

In Paris: Paris St Germain (France) 2, Barcelona (Spain) 1 (0-0). Score: Paris SG - Real (72nd), Vincent Guerin (83rd), Barcelona - Jose Maria Bakero (49th). Attendance: 45,574. Paris SG wins 3-2 on aggregate.

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (AP) — Reserve Jeronimo Bucero scored all 14 of his points in the second half yesterday, leading Manhattan to a 77-67 upset of No. 4 seed Oklahoma in the first round of the NCAA Southeast Regional.

Bucero led a strong bench effort for the 13th-seeded Jaspers (26-4), who were criticized after receiving an at-large berth out of the Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference.

Ryan Minor, the Big Eight player of the year, scored 24 for Oklahoma, but went about 18 minutes without a field goal. The Sooners finished 23-9.

The Jaspers trailed by five at halftime, then scored the first six points of the second half to take the lead. They broke open the game with a 10-0 run that gave them at 52-43 lead. Reserve Justin Phoenix scored seven of those points and finished with nine, all in the second half.

Miami, Ohio 71, No. 15 Arizona 62. Devin Davis scored 24 points — most of them inside against Arizona's depleted front line — as Miami of Ohio built a 10-point lead and held on to upset the 15th-ranked Wildcats.

Miami (23-6), located less than an hour's drive away, fed off the home crowd for its first NCAA tournament victory since 1978. The Redskins, seeded 12th in the Midwest Regional, had lost their last four first-round games.

Miami pushed the lead to 60-50 with 7:30 left and clinched it on Davis's basket with 29 seconds left.

UConn 100, Tenn Chattanooga 71. Connecticut, bigger and better at every position, opened with a torrid 15-0 run against Tennessee-Chattanooga, turned up the pressure even more to build a 25-point lead before halftime, and romped to a victory in the NCAA Western Regional.

Ranked No. 1 a month ago before dropping to No. 8, the Huskies put on a display of power and speed calculated to show they're back in the form that carried them to a 15-0 mark at the start of the season.

Donny Marshall scored 22 points and Ray Allen added 18 to lead Connecticut, which held the Moccasin scoreless for the first 4:45 of the game. Mario Hanson, who finished with 28 points, and Brandon Born, who wound up with 23, scored all but two of Tennessee-Chattanooga's points in the first half.

Doron Sheffer and Uri Cohen-Mintz both scored six points in the victory.

Connecticut beats Tennessee-Chattanooga, 100-71

Connecticut (26-4) looked impressive inside and from 3-point range. Seven-footer Travis Knight clogged up the middle, grabbing 13 rebounds and keeping the Moccasin (19-11) from driving to the basket.

Wake Forest 79, N Carolina A&T 47. Tim Duncan scored 21 points and Randolph Childress had 15 as top-seeded Wake Forest cruised to victory in Baltimore.

The third-ranked Demon Deacons (25-5) won their 11th straight game by holding the 16th-seeded Aggies (15-15) to 30 percent shooting, 22 percent in the first half.

Miami, Ohio 71, Arizona 62. Virginia (22-8) v Nicholls State (24-5) West (Salt Lake City, Utah) Oregon (19-6) v Texas (22-6) Maryland (24-7) v Gonzaga (21-8) Cincinnati (21-11) v Temple (19-10) UConn 100, Tenn Chattanooga 71

First Round TODAY

East (Albany, NY) Tulsa (22-7) v Illinois (19-11) Villanova (25-7) v Old Dominion (20-11) North Carolina Charlotte (19-8) v Stanford (19-8) Massachusetts (26-4) v St. Peter's (19-10) Southeast (Tallahassee, Fla.) Georgetown (22-9) v Xavier, Ohio (23-4) Michigan State (22-9) v Weber State (20-8) Iowa State (22-10) v Florida (17-12) North Carolina (24-8) v Murray State (21-8) Midwest (Austin, Texas) Memphis (22-9) v Louisville (19-13) Purdue (24-8) v Wisconsin-Green Bay (22-7) Syracuse (19-9) v Southern Illinois (23-8) Arkansas (27-5) v Texas Southern (22-6) West (Boise, Idaho) UCLA (25-2) v Florida International (11-18) Missouri (19-9) v Indiana (19-11) Mississippi State (20-7) v Santa Clara (21-6)

Second Round TOMORROW

East (Baltimore, Md.) Wake Forest vs. Minnesota-Saint Louis winner Alabama-Pennsylvania winner vs. Oklahoma State-Drexel winner Southeast (Memphis, Tenn.) Kentucky-Mount St. Mary's winner vs. Brigham Young-Tulane winner Arizona State-Ball State winner vs. Manhattanville (Tenn.) Midwest (Dayton, Ohio) Kansas-Colgate winner vs. Western Kentucky-Michigan winner Miami, Ohio winner vs. Virginia-Nicholls State winner West (Salt Lake City, Utah) Oregon-Texas winner vs. Maryland-Gonzaga winner Cincinnati-Temple winner vs. Connecticut

NCAA on Channel 5

NCAA highlights can be seen at the following times on Cable TV's Sports Channel 5:

FRIDAY — 10:30 Thursday's highlights. SATURDAY — 1:00 repeat 1:30 repeat 2:30 Friday's highlights 2:45 repeat SUNDAY — 14:30 repeat 20:30 Saturday's highlights. MONDAY — 16:30 repeat 20:30 Sunday's highlights.

Monitor Super Channel for possible live broadcasts

CHICAGO — Scottie Pippen scored 20 points and Toni Kukoc added 18 as the streaking Chicago Bulls built a 12-point halftime lead and cruised to a 99-86 victory over the Atlanta Hawks on Wednesday.

Pete Myers added 14 points and Ron Harper 10 for Chicago, which won for the eighth time in 10 games.

"I was not exactly enthralled with our energy in the second half," Chicago coach Phil Jackson said. "But we got the job done."

L.A. Clippers 117, Detroit 87. Malik Sealy scored 25 points to lead seven players in double figures. Loy Vaught added 21 points and 14 rebounds for Los Angeles, which recorded its largest margin of victory this season in winning for the third time in five games.

"It's about time we blew someone out and got one that we didn't have to sweat out the last couple of minutes," Los Angeles coach Bill Fitch said.

Pacers 117, Bucks 108. Reggie Miller scored a season-high 40 points, including 17 in the final quarter when host Indiana rallied.

The Pacers trailed 93-86 before Miller hit his sixth 3-pointer of the night. He followed with two free throws with 7:15 to go and later tied the game for the final time 95-95 by hitting two free throws with 5:53 to play.

Miller had nine of his points in a 13-2 streak that ended when Dale Davis grabbed an offensive rebound and put it in for a 99-95 advantage.

Todd Day matched his season and career-high with 34 points to lead Milwaukee and Glenn Robinson added 28 for the Bucks. Vin Baker had 18 points and 17 rebounds. *Reuter, AP*

WEDNESDAY'S RESULTS:

New Jersey 108, Orlando 99 Indiana 117, Milwaukee 88 Chicago 99, Atlanta 86 L.A. Clippers 117, Detroit 87 Golden State 119, L.A. Lakers 108

NCAA Basketball Tournament First Round YESTERDAY

East (Baltimore, Md.) Wake Forest 79, N Carolina A&T 47 Minnesota (19-11) v Saint Louis (22-7) Alabama (22-9) v Pennsylvania (22-9) Oklahoma State (23-9) v Drexel (22-7) Southeast (Memphis, Tenn.) Kentucky (25-4) v Mount St. Mary's, Md. (17-12) Brigham Young (22-6) v Tulane (22-8) Arizona State (22-8) v Ball State (19-10) Manhattan 77, Oklahoma 67 (Dayton, Ohio) Kansas (25-5) v Colgate (17-12) Western Kentucky (26-3) v Michigan (17-13)

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Pippen leads charge as Bulls beat Hawks



BREAKTHROUGH — New Jersey Nets forward Derrick Coleman drives for the basket through the Magic's defense during Wednesday's game. (Reuter)

FA allows Grobbelaar, others to keep playing

LONDON (Reuter) — Soccer Grobbelaar, Hans Segers and John Fashanu, released on bail by police investigating match-fixing allegations in English soccer, were given the go-ahead to keep playing by the Football Association yesterday.

FA chief executive Graham Kelly, speaking on radio, said Southampton goalkeeper Grobbelaar, Wimbledon keeper Segers and Aston Villa striker Fashanu would be "free to play" for their clubs Saturday.

"There are no powers under football rules that could prevent them playing and I'm not so sure that there should be," said Kelly.

"In this country people are innocent until proven otherwise. It's a very complicated case and I think only in the most exceptional circumstances, where there is a clear prima facie case, as in Eric Cantona's case, should we have the power to suspend immediately."

Grobbelaar could be back in the Southampton side for Saturday's visit to Nottingham Forest, while Segers will be looking to return for Wimbledon in their match against Crystal Palace. Fashanu is unavailable for Villa because of a serious knee injury.

Grobbelaar, 31-year-old Fashanu and 33-year-old Dutchman Segers all maintain their innocence.

Spurs survived some first half scares and then dominated the second period as defending titlist United could only trim Rovers lead to three points. It was the first time this season the Reds had failed to score at home.

In other Premier League games, last place Leicester appeared virtually doomed after losing 3-1 at home to Leeds, for whom Ghanaian striker Anthony Yeboah scored twice. But the survival hopes of Everton, Manchester City, Southampton and West Ham remain strong.

Queens Park Rangers moved up four places to half way with a 2-0 victory over Norwich, which is sliding into danger after going 11 games without a win.

In Division One, promotion-chasing Wolves, which also has made it to the quarter-final of the FA Cup, tumbled 2-0 at struggling neighbor West

Bromwich Albion and remains off the pace in fourth place.

At Old Trafford, Andy Cole, who scored five goals against Ipswich 10 days ago, hit the bar from six yards against Spurs and Tottenham goalkeeper Ian Walker made a spectacular stop to keep out a header from Paul Ince.

After the break it was Spurs who created the chances with some elegant soccer. But Nick Barnby shot wide from close range with only keeper Peter Schmeichel to beat.

Yeboah struck twice for Leeds after Welsh striker Iwan Roberts had given Leicester the lead at Filbert Street. Carlton Palmer scored a third for Leeds near the end and his team jumped above Tottenham into sixth place.

Les Ferdinand's 19th goal of the season and another strike from the promising Kevin Gallen near the end gave QPR victory over Norwich.

Wednesday's results, Premier League: Everton 1, Manchester City 1; Leicester 1, Leeds 3; Manchester United 0, Tottenham 0; Queens Park Rangers 2, Norwich 0; Southampton 1, West Ham 1.

Division One: Derby 4, Barnley 0; Portsmouth 3, Millwall 2; Swindon 1, Sunderland 0; West Bromwich Albion 2, Wolves 0.

Division Two: Brighton 0, Cardiff 0; Bristol Rovers 2, Cambridge United 1.

Spurs hold Man Utd to 0-0 draw

LONDON (AP) — Improving Tottenham held Manchester United to a 0-0 tie at Old Trafford Wednesday to prevent the Reds cutting Blackburn's lead atop the Premier League standings to one point.

Spurs survived some first half scares and then dominated the second period as defending titlist United could only trim Rovers lead to three points. It was the first time this season the Reds had failed to score at home.

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At Old Trafford, Andy Cole, who scored five goals against Ipswich 10 days ago, hit the bar from six yards against Spurs and Tottenham goalkeeper Ian Walker made a spectacular stop to keep out a header from Paul Ince.

After the break it was Spurs who created the chances with some elegant soccer. But Nick Barnby shot wide from close range with only keeper Peter Schmeichel to beat.

Yeboah struck twice for Leeds after Welsh striker Iwan Roberts had given Leicester the lead at Filbert Street. Carlton Palmer scored a third for Leeds near the end and his team jumped above Tottenham into sixth place.

Les Ferdinand's 19th goal of the season and another strike from the promising Kevin Gallen near the end gave QPR victory over Norwich.

Wednesday's results, Premier League: Everton 1, Manchester City 1; Leicester 1, Leeds 3; Manchester United 0, Tottenham 0; Queens Park Rangers 2, Norwich 0; Southampton 1, West Ham 1.

Division One: Derby 4, Barnley 0; Portsmouth 3, Millwall 2; Swindon 1, Sunderland 0; West Bromwich Albion 2, Wolves 0.

Division Two: Brighton 0, Cardiff 0; Bristol Rovers 2, Cambridge United 1.

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Mac Tel Aviv, Haifa in neck and neck race

DEREK FATTAL

THE two main contenders for the National League title enter Round 22 of the season level on points. Maccabi Haifa and Maccabi Tel Aviv are separated by a slim margin of three goals in favor of the Haifaites with nine matches left to play.

The Haifaies finally got the better of the boys from the Big Orange with last weekend's narrow victory over Maccabi Netanya, while the former leader scraped a draw in the derby against Hapoel Tel Aviv.

The pundits have the chance to compare both teams in action in Ramat Gan tomorrow in the afternoon's doubleheader at the National Stadium.

With the battle for honors now entering the final lap the champions are looking good to retain the league trophy, and will attempt to stretch their record to six straight wins against Betar Tel Aviv. The match will be screened live on Channel 2. In recent weeks, Haifa has recaptured the splendid form that marked last season's conquest of the division. Nevertheless, Betar comes to the fixture with the confidence of having completed one of the biggest shocks to date in the current campaign, with the 3-2 away victory in the clubs' first encounter.

Maccabi Tel Aviv takes to the field in the earlier of the two matches, against Bnei Yehuda. Maccabi emerged 2-1 victor last time the sides met, and the formbook suggests a similar result tomorrow.

Maccabi has won 3, lost 1, and drawn 1 in its last five matches while Bnei Yehuda has a 1-1-3 record. The Hativva Quarter side may display a somewhat less comprising mood following yesterday's remembrance ceremony for former striker Nikolai Kodritsky, tragically killed a year ago in a car accident.

Hapoel Petah Tikva is beginning to lose touch with the leading pair, and will aim to keep within range with its visit to Netanya this afternoon.

This round presents two interesting rematches from big-scoring games played earlier in the season. Maccabi Herzliya was fayed 8-1 by visitor Betar Jerusalem, while Hapoel Haifa hammered seven goals into Beit She'an's net last time around.

Among the rest of the weekend program, the tie between 4th-placed Hapoel Beersheba and 5th-placed Hapoel Tel Aviv has the makings of a lively attraction.

Betar Tel Aviv v. Maccabi Haifa, (3-2), National Stadium Ramat Gan, 18:00; Maccabi Netanya v. Hapoel Petah Tikva, (0-2), Netanya, today, 15:00; Ironi Ashdod v. Zahir Holon, (1-3), Ashdod, 16:00; Hapoel Beersheba v. Hapoel Tel Aviv, (1-1), Beersheba, tomorrow, 18:00; Hapoel Haifa v. Bnei Yehuda, (1-1), Petah Tikva; Maccabi Herzliya v. Betar Jerusalem, (1-8), Herzliya; Hapoel Beit She'an v. Hapoel Haifa, (0-7), Beit She'an.

NFL owners vote down Rams' move

DEREK FATTAL

PHOENIX (AP) — National Football League owners voted down the Rams' move to St. Louis, setting up the possibility of a long court battle.

In addition to a likely lawsuit from the Rams, Missouri attorney general Jay Nixon has threatened antitrust litigation against the league.

NFL commissioner Paul Tagliabue did not immediately disclose the official vote on Wednesday, but said 20 or 21 owners were against the move, three were in favor and about half-dozen abstained. Approval required a vote of 75 percent.

"We're still hopeful we can avoid litigation," Tagliabue said. "We're not trying to be confrontational. We're trying to be sensible and fair."

The vote ended three days of deliberations on the subject and left St. Louis a three-time loser in the NFL wars.

Ownership problems bogged down the St. Louis expansion effort in 1993, and the city lost out to Charlotte, North Carolina, and Jacksonville, Florida, which began play this fall.

The Rams said on January 17 that they intended to move to St. Louis and play in a \$260 million domed stadium due for completion in October.

But Tagliabue recommended Monday the owners not approve the move because it did not meet two of the criteria set down a decade ago by former commissioner Pete Rozelle — owner responsibility and leaving a higher television market for a lower one.

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Erlich, Bloom heading towards possible final

THE scene looks set for an interesting showdown between Eyal Erlich and Gilad Bloom in tomorrow's final of the third leg of the Club Hotel Eilat satellite in Jaffa.

Erlich and Bloom are ranked 303 and 204 respectively in the latest IBM/ATP listings and are both eager to clinch a singles berth in the Davis Cup tie against Norway on March 31.

Top seed Erlich and Bloom, seeded third, are the only seeds to reach today's semifinals.

Erlich, driving for his third successive satellite title, demolished Czech Radoslav Svetlik (469) 6-2, 6-0, sweeping aside any

opposition with his excellent serves and overwhelming all-round dominance.

Bloom looked steady and in control as he ousted qualifier Ignacio Trujillo (273) of Spain, 6-3, 6-3.

Erlich's opponent today is Bulgarian Milen Velov (533) who beat Hungary's Atilla Savolt 6-4, 6-2 while Bloom faces seventh seed Giorgio Galimberti (442) who defeated local player Lior Dahan 6-2, 6-3.

Nataly Cahana is the only Israeli player to advance to today's semifinal in the \$20,000 Ada

Moross women's circuit.

With the Israeli presence heavily outweighing the foreign contingent, kudos are hardly in order for the local competitors.

Second seed Cahana beat Hador Ronen 6-0, 6-0 to meet Alida Gallovits from Romania today. Gallovits survived an attack by Tamar Keren to win 4-6, 6-1, 6-4.

The other semifinal will be contested between top seed Nelly Barkan from the Ukraine who dismissed Meirav Duek 6-3, 6-3 and Bulgaria's Jana Sokolenko who defeated Tessa Shapovalova from the Ukraine 6-2, 6-2.

Today's play begins at 14:00 with tomorrow's final at 10:30.

SCOREBOARD

HOCKEY — The national ice hockey team beat Turkey 14-2 at the European Junior Ice Hockey Championships (Pool C) in Elekirina, Lithuania on Wednesday

THE team finished third in 1990. Last season, Limoges lost in the quarterfinals to Panathinaikos.

Panathinaikos 99, Bologna 56. Panathinaikos returned to the Final Four for the second consecutive season in a convincing victory over the visiting Italians.

Zarko Paspalj scored 20, Frangos, Avertis 15 and Miroslav Petruski 14 as the Greeks bolted to a 46-18 halftime lead and never looked back.

The Greeks lost Game 1 in Bologna 85-68 before winning the next two games at home.

For Bologna, Augusto Binelli had 14. Star player Predrag Danilovic was held to only six points.

The loss marks the fourth consecutive season that Bologna has made the quarterfinals, only to lose the best of three series each year.

Last season, Panathinaikos lost to a Paspalj-led Olympiakos in the semifinals in Tel Aviv.

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Peres: No new info on Ron Arad

FOREIGN Minister Shimon Peres, returning from a visit in Germany, said yesterday that there is no new information concerning the whereabouts of missing air force navigator Ron Arad.

Peres said Israel had asked the Germans to take a number of steps to try to locate Arad. "Germany and Chancellor [Kohl] responded to our request, but unfortunately nothing came out of it."

Recent newspaper reports said Arad is being held in an Iranian jail, and the German government had

been in contact with Iran over his fate. Germany only confirmed that it had made inquiries into the matter.

Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin said last month that Israel is convinced that Arad was being held by official Iranian circles, although it is not clear where.

"We are working on the matter non-stop," said Peres, "and we are checking into every hint to see if we can find where he is, what is happening to him and if it is possible to bring him home." (Itim)

Israelis turned back at Jordanian border

Jerusalem Post Staff

HUNDREDS of Israeli tourists were turned away by overwhelmed Jordanian border authorities yesterday during a Purim rush to cross into the kingdom, an Israeli official said.

More than 2,000 Israeli holiday-makers lined up at the recently opened Sheikh Hussein bridge over the Jordan River hoping to spend the Purim break in Jordan.

Jordanian officials at the bridge,

stretching the daily quota of 600 Israelis, allowed in an extra 200.

"At this point Israelis are being turned back," Manachem Zelicovski, deputy director-general of the Airports Authority, said. Zelicovski blamed travel agents for over-booking.

Jordan might abolish the quota in the coming months, Zelicovski said.



Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin meets with publishers from Egypt and Morocco at the 17th Jerusalem International Book Fair yesterday. The Arabs are attending the fair for the first time. From left are Zev Birger, fair managing director; Abbas Ahmed Falala and George Rarab, of Egypt; Rabin; Abdel Rahman Hawanin, of Egypt; and Najimi Abdel Rahman Tilali, of Morocco. (R. Magos)

IMA blasts Sneh plan to make 'black medicine' a crime

JUDY SIEGEL

THE Israel Medical Association yesterday expressed its "shock" over Health Minister Ephraim Sneh's announced plans to present a government bill making "black medicine" a crime. It also complained that Sneh had not informed it in advance.

The IMA, which represents over 12,000 physicians, said it was amazed that Sneh—himself a doctor—would "put a badge of shame" on the entire profession and initiate a "superfluous law that would only cause harm in principle and practice."

Last week, Sneh said that his office had prepared legislation stating that accepting an under-the-table payment or gift for speeding up medical treatment or getting a specific surgeon to operate would be a crime, rather than just an administrative offense.

The law would encompass all public hospitals (i.e., those owned by the government, Kupat Holim Clalit or voluntary organizations

that receive government funds), as well as all health professionals and para-professionals.

Hospital personnel would not be allowed to let a patient "jump the queue" in exchange for illicit payments, nor would a doctor agree to perform surgery in the hospital's facilities except under recognized private medical service arrangements.

IMA Chairwoman Dr. Miriam Tzangen said that existing criminal laws already prohibit public workers from taking bribes. Singling out doctors, she said, is not acceptable in a democratic country and violates the principle of equality before the law.

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Postal worker arrested for destroying mail, stealing check

JUDY SIEGEL

THE woman who runs a postal agency in Jerusalem's Katamonim neighborhood was arrested late Wednesday night on suspicion of stealing thousands of shekels in checks from envelopes and destroying thousands of pieces of mail.

The woman, who was held for questioning for 48 hours, admitted involvement in some of the charges.

The worker, who has run the postal agency on a contractual basis for two years, was caught after a routine check by the authority's internal comptroller discovered that numerous pieces of mail in her area never arrived.

Security officials were called in,

and they found she and her husband had removed checks from envelopes of large government offices and destroyed the accompanying letters.

They were also accused of putting the remaining evidence through a shredding machine.

The punishment for holding up or destroying mail is a five-year jail sentence; the couple could get even more for stealing the checks, according to the authority.

Kuwait: Koranic changes not political

A KUWAITI education official has denied Islamist accusations that some Koranic verses critical of Jews had been deleted from school textbooks to appease Israel.

In remarks published on Thursday, Rashid al-Hamad a former ministry official in charge of curriculum development, said the deletions were among revisions that were constantly made to textbooks in several subjects for reasons that had nothing to do with politics.

"The whole revision of textbooks is technical and educational and has nothing to do with politics," al-Qabas newspaper quoted Hamad as saying.

"The team did not deal with the verses on the basis that they talked about Jews."

Islamist members of parliament plan to question Education Minister Ahmad al-Rubei in the assembly about the changes with a view to introducing a no confidence motion, a measure that could lead to his dismissal.

A previous Islamist-inspired no-confidence motion against Rubei based on charges of mismanagement and corruption by ministry officials was narrowly defeated on February 28.

It was the most direct challenge to government authority since the assembly was revived in 1992 after a six-year break.

Hamad supervised the revisions last year when he headed a unit that revises school curricula. He said reviewing textbooks was routine and was not subject to political instruction.

"The world is progressing. This compels a revision of all curricula," he said.

Sudan: Israel will attack

CAIRO (Reuters) - Sudan sees Israel as the enemy of the whole Arab world and believes it will sooner or later attack Egypt, Sudanese President Omar Hassan Bashir said in an interview published yesterday.

Bashir told the London-based Arabic newspaper *al-Quds al-Arabi* that he thought peace agreements between Israel and its Arab neighbors had changed nothing.

"In our view the enemy is the Zionist enemy however many peace agreements are signed with them," he said. "It's an expansionist enemy, and we have not yet seen any sign that Israel has abandoned its aggressive policy toward the Arab nation."

Qatar invites US Jewish leaders

SHMUEL SEGEV

QATAR has invited the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations to visit Doha soon, according to a diplomatic source there.

The Qatari source said the invitation had been under consideration for some time, but it was finalized after US Secretary of State Warren Christopher's recent Jeddah meeting with the foreign ministers of the six Gulf Cooperation Council countries.

The invitation was originally issued for the week of Pessah. But a Jewish leader said that due to kashrut problems, Qatar promised to reschedule the visit, possibly during May.

Diplomatic sources said the invitation is part of Emron's efforts to sell Qatari natural gas to Israel. Former US secretary of state James Baker is one of the oil company's lawyers and reportedly is pushing to conclude the deal.

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